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FOLLOWING OSIRIS

Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia



MARK SMITH

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Abbreviations and Conventions

ASAE	*Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* (Cairo, 1900–)
BACE	*Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* (North Ryde, 1990–)
BASP	*Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* (Urbana, 1964–)
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* (Cairo, 1901–)
BiOr	*Bibliotheca Orientalis* (Leiden, 1943–)
BSAC	*Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* (Cairo, 1936–)
BSEG	*Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie, Genève* (Geneva, 1979–)
BSFE	*Bulletin de la Société Français d'Égyptologie* (Paris, 1949–)
CdE	*Chronique d'Égypte* (Brussels, 1926–)
CGC	*Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire* (Cairo, 1901–)
CRAIBL	*Comptes Rendus à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (Paris, 1857–)
CRIPEL	*Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille* (Lille, 1973–)
EVO	*Egitto e Vicino Oriente* (Pisa, 1978–)
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* (Boston, 1962–)
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (London, 1914–)
JEOL	*Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschaap 'Ex Oriente Lux'* (Leiden, 1938–)
JJP	*Journal of Juristic Papyrology* (Warsaw, 1946–)
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago, 1942–)
JSSEA	*Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* (Toronto, 1970–)
MDAIK	*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* (Berlin, Wiesbden, Mainz, 1930–)
O.	Ostracon
OLP	*Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* (Leuven, 1970–)
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1898–)
OMRO	*Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseums van Oudheden te Leiden* (Leiden, 1920–)
P.	Papyrus
PM	B. Porter and R. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings* (Oxford, 1927–)
PSBA	*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (London, 1879–1918)
RdE	*Revue d'Égyptologie* (Cairo and Paris, 1930–)

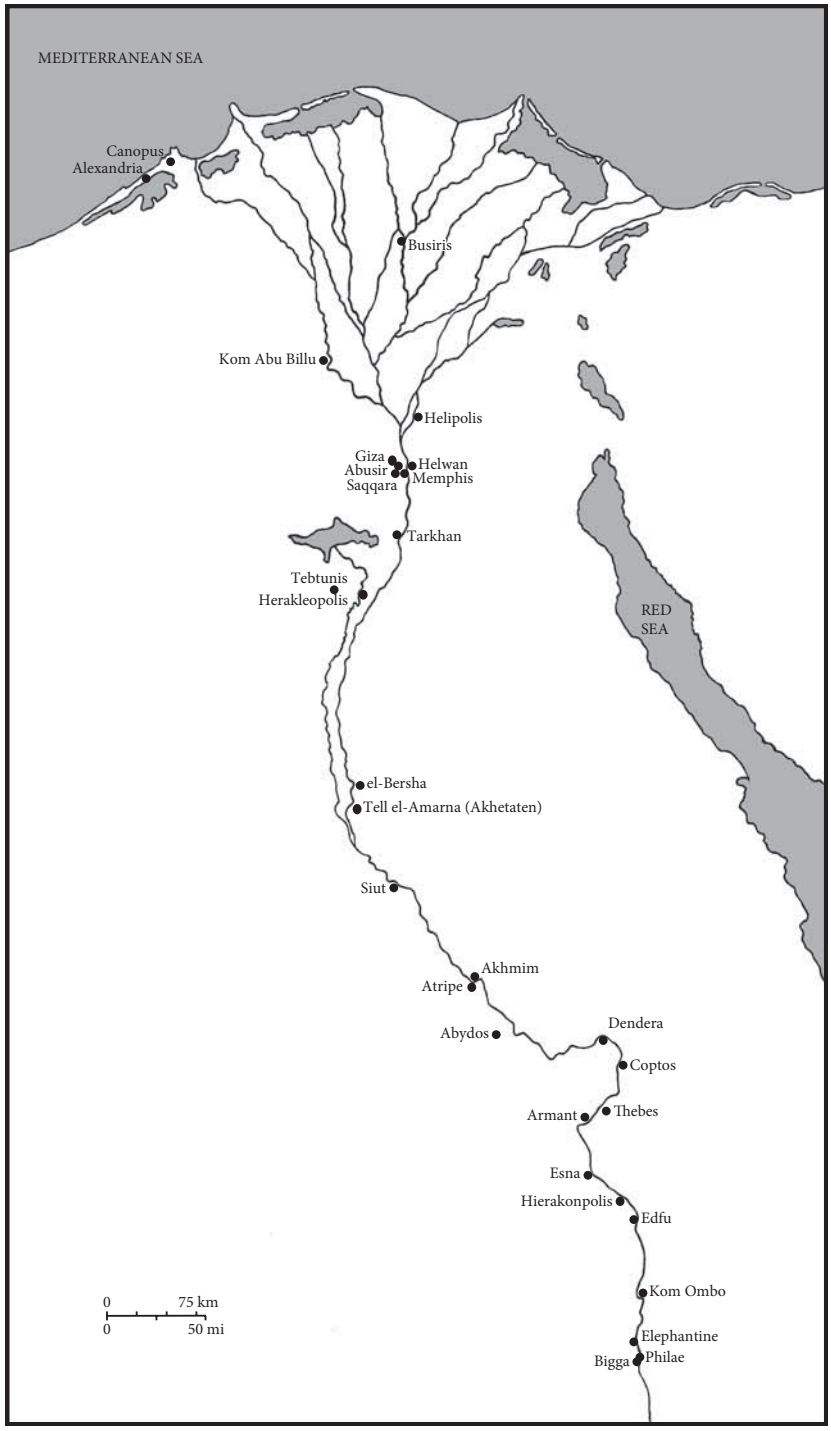
SAK	*Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* (Hamburg, 1974–)
Wb.	A. Erman and H. Grapow (eds), *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 7 vols plus 5 vols of Belegstellen (Leipzig and Berlin, 1926–63)
WdO	*Die Welt des Orients* (Göttingen, 1947–)
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Vienna, 1886–)
ZÄS	*Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1863–)
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (Bonn, 1967–)

Outline of Egyptian Chronology

The chronological outline below is based on the one in I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 480–9. Where dates for two or more dynasties overlap, this is because they ruled simultaneously in different parts of the country. From 690 BC onward, we know the precise years when the reigns of individual kings began and ended. Prior to then, however, there is a degree of uncertainty, which increases the further back in time one goes. In the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period, for example, the margin of likely error is about ten years, in the Old Kingdom more like fifty years, and for the start of the First Dynasty perhaps as much as one hundred and fifty years. Dates for the predynastic period are even more imprecise. Such uncertainty inevitably leads to discrepancies among various modern reconstructions of Egyptian chronology. The range of possible variation will become apparent if one compares the dates below with those given in another study, E. Hornung, R. Krauss, and D. Warburton, *Ancient Egyptian Chronology* (Leiden and Boston, 2006), pp. 492–5. The latter work provides a useful overview of the different types of evidence on which modern chronologies of ancient Egypt are based, as well as a discussion of the specific problems involved in establishing a reliable chronology for each individual period of Egyptian history.

Predynastic Period	***c.*4400–3000 BC**
Badarian Period	*c.*4400–4000
Naqada I (Amratian) Period	*c.*4000–3500
Naqada II (Gerzean) Period	*c.*3500–3200
Naqada III Period	*c.*3200–3000
Early Dynastic Period	***c.*3000–2686 BC**
First Dynasty	*c.*3000–2890
Second Dynasty	2890–2686
Old Kingdom	**2686–2160 BC**
Third Dynasty	2686–2613
Fourth Dynasty	2613–2494
Fifth Dynasty	2494–2345
Sixth Dynasty	2345–2181
Seventh and Eighth Dynasties	2181–2160
First Intermediate Period	**2160–2055 BC**
Ninth and Tenth Dynasties	2160–2025
Early Eleventh Dynasty	2125–2055

Middle Kingdom	**2055–1650 BC**
Later Eleventh Dynasty	2055–1985
Twelfth Dynasty	1985–1773
Thirteenth Dynasty	1773–after 1650
Fourteenth Dynasty	1773–1650
Second Intermediate Period	**1650–1550 BC**
Fifteenth Dynasty	1650–1550
Sixteenth Dynasty	1650–1580
Seventeenth Dynasty	*c.*1580–1550
New Kingdom	**1550–1069 BC**
Eighteenth Dynasty	1550–1295
Nineteenth Dynasty	1295–1186
Twentieth Dynasty	1186–1069
Third Intermediate Period	**1069–664 BC**
Twenty-First Dynasty	1069–945
Twenty-Second Dynasty	945–715
Twenty-Third Dynasty	818–715
Twenty-Fourth Dynasty	727–715
Twenty-Fifth Dynasty	747–656
Late Period	**664–332 BC**
Twenty-Sixth Dynasty	664–525
Twenty-Seventh Dynasty (also called First Persian Period)	525–404
Twenty-Eighth Dynasty	404–399
Twenty-Ninth Dynasty	399–380
Thirtieth Dynasty	380–343
Second Persian Period	343–332
Ptolemaic Period	**332–30 BC**
Macedonian Dynasty	332–305
Ptolemaic Dynasty	305–30
Roman Period	**30 BC–AD 395**



Map of Egypt Showing the Chief Places Mentioned in the Text

Introduction

In 1948, the German Egyptologist Alexander Scharff, a leading expert on the religion of ancient Egypt, published a book about the god Osiris which can still be consulted with profit today. In a note in the introduction of this work he observed 'Um wirklich etwas einigermaßen Abschließendes über Osiris zu sagen, dürfte kaum ein einziges Forscherleben ausreichen.'[1] Thirty-one centuries earlier, the twentieth dynasty king Ramesses IV, who also knew a thing or two about ancient Egyptian religion, commented that each individual form or aspect of Osiris was more mysterious than those of the rest of the Ennead combined.[2] Statements like these make any attempt to write a book about Osiris seem a rather daunting prospect, especially if one has not spent a lifetime studying that god and lacks the emic knowledge of an ancient Egyptian. How does one begin to treat such a vast and multi-faceted subject? One approach is to limit the scope of the investigation by selecting a discrete feature or aspect of Osiris and focusing attention upon that. This is the approach adopted here.

This book is specifically concerned with ancient Egyptian conceptions of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased, or what we might call the Osirian afterlife. It is not a continuous or comprehensive account of Egyptian ideas on that subject. Rather, it focuses on five distinct periods in their development, spread over four millennia. The periods in question are ones in which significant changes in Egyptian ideas about Osiris and the dead are known to have occurred, or where it has been argued that they did. An important aim of this book is to investigate when and why such changes happened, and how they can be recognized in the historical and archaeological record. There will also be a focus on the causes of religious change. To what extent, for instance, did the state influence developments in the religious sphere? Finally, there will be an emphasis on confronting problems. There are no easy solutions for some of these problems, but this does not mean that we should refrain from discussing them.

Although this book does not provide a continuous history, one should not view its individual chapters separately. It is important to look for connections among them. The same themes, the same problems, may be treated in more than one chapter, and

[1] A. Scharff, *Die Ausbreitung des Osiriskultes in der Frühzeit und während des Alten Reiches* (Munich, 1948), p. 36 note 3.

[2] See K. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Historical and Biographical* 6 (Oxford, 1983), p. 22, lines 6–7.

there are advantages in looking at the broad sweep of history and not just one period in isolation. Adapting Scharff's dictum, one might argue that to really say anything reasonably definitive about Osiris one has to look at his entire history from beginning to end. One recurrent theme explored in the book has already been mentioned above: the relationship between religion and politics. How closely is religious change linked to political change? In a society like that of ancient Egypt, how much control did rulers or governments have over what people believed about the afterlife? Another is the actual nature of that afterlife. Did the Egyptians think that posthumous existence was the same for everyone, or did they envisage separate afterlives for rulers and their subjects?

A further important topic that receives discussion in virtually all chapters is the nature of the evidence at our disposal and how to use it. The most salient points arising from this discussion are: the need to take all of the available evidence into account when investigating a particular question, and not simply a part of it; the importance of dating that evidence as precisely as possible, and the problems that result when we cannot do so; and the desirability of scrutinizing regional and local developments carefully before one tries to combine the evidence pertaining to these into a bigger picture. The limitations of the evidence are explored as well. Can we infer religious belief, or more specifically, belief about the hereafter, from artefacts or material remains in the absence of written sources? What can ritual texts tell us about Egyptian aspirations for the afterlife? In this respect, the book is as much about how to study Egyptian conceptions of a god like Osiris as it is about those conceptions themselves.

The first seven chapters of this book follow a roughly chronological order, moving from the earliest evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife to the latest. Each chapter deals with a specific period or periods in the development of Egyptian ideas concerning the relationship between Osiris and the dead. As will be seen, these periods rarely correspond to those into which we are accustomed to divide the political history of Egypt. It is not always easy to fit cultural and social trends into such a framework. More often than not, we will find ourselves tracing the particular developments in which we are interested across the boundaries separating one dynasty or kingdom from another. From our perspective, what happens during the transition between one period and the next is just as important and interesting as what happens in those periods themselves. In this respect, the book both challenges and subverts the traditional Egyptological approach whereby each individual phase of Egypt's political history is deemed to have its own distinctive religious ethos and the religious phenomena pertaining to each phase are studied in isolation.[3]

This book begins well before the earliest appearance of Osiris in the written record. In fact, the first evidence considered in it is approximately 55,000 years old. Of the eight chapters that make up the book, no less than two are devoted entirely to periods of Egyptian history when belief in Osiris is not yet attested. This might seem strange at first sight. However, it is clear that the Egyptians believed in a hereafter before they

[3] See, for example, J. Assmann, *Ägypten: Eine Sinngeschichte* (Munich, 1996).

believed in that god. What was this hereafter like? In order to understand the background from which Osiris arose, it will be helpful to investigate what the Egyptians thought would happen to them after they died prior to the time when their posthumous fate became so closely linked with him. What roles did divine beings play in the earliest Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife, for example? Why did Osiris supplant the deities who originally fulfilled such roles? Study of pre-Osirian Egyptian ideas about the next world will provide a context for our exploration of questions like these.

As stated above, this is a book about a specific aspect of Osiris: his relationship with the deceased and how this was conceived by the ancient Egyptians. Needless to say, there are numerous other salient aspects of that god that merit study: his temple cult, his relationships with other deities, his iconography, and his association with natural phenomena like the Nile inundation, to name only a few. These other aspects will not receive attention here except when they have a direct bearing upon the god's evolving relationship with the dead. When Osiris is identified or closely associated with another deity, for instance, what is the significance of this for the deceased? How does the fact that Osiris is linked with the Nile inundation condition their expectations for the afterlife? When the image of Osiris as a king of the living who hears the pleas of his subjects and rescues them in their time of need becomes more prominent in hymns and other texts employed in the temple cult, how is this reflected in texts that relate to the dead? So other aspects of the god do receive some consideration, but only insofar as this helps to elucidate the main topic with which we are concerned.

Following the first two chapters of the book, which explore pre-Osirian conceptions of the afterlife in Egypt, Chapter 3 investigates the questions of when belief in Osiris as a god of the dead first arose, and how the nature of his relationship with the deceased is configured in the earliest sources where it is attested. Its title, 'Unreading the Pyramid Texts. So who is Osiris?', conflates elements of the titles of two influential articles that deal with these subjects, the conclusions of which are subjected to detailed scrutiny here.[4] Chapter 4 investigates a particularly controversial idea, the theory of the democratization of the afterlife, according to which the social upheavals that occurred at the end of the Old Kingdom enabled non-royal individuals to usurp privileges in the next world which had previously been restricted to royalty, among them identification with Osiris and integration into the hierarchy of divine beings who were associated with that god.

Chapter 5 looks at two important religious developments of the New Kingdom, both involving the solar deity, and assesses their impact upon Egyptian conceptions of the Osirian afterlife. The first is the introduction of a new theology emphasizing the Aten, the visible manifestation of the sun god, by the eighteenth dynasty king Akhenaten during the Amarna Period. The second is the increasing prominence accorded to the theme of the cyclically recurring nocturnal union of Osiris and Re in the underworld,

[4] The articles in question are: H. Hays, 'Unreading the Pyramids', *BIFAO* 109 (2009), pp. 195–220, and B. Mathieu, 'Mais qui est donc Osiris? Ou la politique sous le linceul de la religion', *ENiM* 3 (2010), pp. 77–107.

both in the decoration of tombs, predominantly royal ones, and in other sources like the Book of the Dead. This conception is already attested prior to the Amarna Period, but reaches its peak in the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties. One way that the Egyptians expressed the union of the two deities was with the formula 'Re resting in Osiris, Osiris resting in Re'. In recognition of its value as a concise summation of an extremely complex theological construct, this formula has been incorporated in the title of the chapter.

Chapter 6 investigates the transition from the Late Period to the Ptolemaic Period, with emphasis upon two particular questions. First, did the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty have an impact on Egyptian ideas about the afterlife, and second, did it have an impact on the way in which Egyptians conceptualized the relationship between Osiris and the deceased? In connection with the second question, the chapter also considers whether or not the rise to prominence of the god Sarapis, who was sometimes identified with Osiris, influenced Egyptian perceptions of that relationship.

The disappearance of a god, like a deity's initial appearance in the historical record, is a religious change of particular significance. Accordingly, Chapter 7 looks at the evidence for the end of belief in Osiris and the Osirian afterlife in Egypt. Four places are used as case studies: the Akhmim region, Philae, Abydos, and Thebes. These case studies provide a model which can be used to investigate when that belief ceased in other parts of the country. The question posed in the title of the chapter, 'Where is the king of the two lands?', has been adapted from a lament preserved in a ritual papyrus which expresses the grief felt by the devotees of Osiris as a consequence of his departure from them.[5] The final chapter of the book, Chapter 8, summarizes the results obtained in the preceding ones and offers a few final reflections on the questions of why belief in the Osirian afterlife arose in the first place and why it came to an end when it did.

Notwithstanding the cautionary advice of Scharff quoted above, a vast number of books and articles have been written about Osiris, and the production of these shows no sign of abating. It is not my intention to provide a literature review here. Those sources which I have consulted during the writing of this book are listed in the bibliography, which will give a good idea of the breadth of material, both primary and secondary, which has been put to use. It is hoped that the chronological scope of the present volume, the range of questions that it asks, and the methods that it employs in seeking to answer them, are sufficiently different to those of existing works on Osiris to justify its addition to the corpus of literature on that deity.

One word that recurs with particular frequency in this book is 'belief'. It has already been used seven times in this introduction alone. Above all, the book is concerned with the rise and fall of belief in the Osirian afterlife. But what precisely is meant by this term? One definition of belief is 'mental assent to a statement, proposition, or fact'. One believes that there are insect-eating mammals called aardvarks that live in Africa, or

[5] P. MMA 35.9.21, 6/1. See J.-C. Goyon, *Le papyrus d'Imouthès fils de Psintaês au Metropolitan Museum of Art de New-York (Papyrus MMA 35.9.21)* (New York, 1999), plate 5. The original actually says 'Where is Pharaoh, life, prosperity, and health?'.

that the Triassic Period preceded the Jurassic. But the term can also be used in an extended sense to mean acceptance that a proposition is true and adoption of a particular mode of behaviour as a consequence. Those who believe that education is important make an effort to send their children to good schools. Those who believe in the values espoused by a political party may not only vote for it but campaign or do other work on its behalf during elections.

In the context of religion, the word 'belief' is normally used with this second more extended sense. One believes that a supernatural being exists and is motivated to behave in certain ways as a result. These might include worship of the being in question, adherence to a particular moral code which it is thought that being will approve, or both. But there are numerous other possible responses as well, ranging from indifference or disregard to attempts to gain mastery over a being in whom one believes and to compel that being to obey one's will.[6] It is with this second more extended sense that the word 'belief' is used in the present book. Thus, for our purposes, the concept of belief in the Osirian afterlife encompasses not only acceptance that such an afterlife exists, but also the aspirations for the next world of those who accept its existence and the things that they do in this one in order to fulfil them.

According to a widespread Egyptian tradition, the god Osiris was born in Thebes on the first epagomenal day, the 361st day of the year, as the eldest child of Geb and Nut, although some variant accounts differ as to the day and place of his birth and his parentage.[7] At delivery, he measured one cubit (52.3 cm) in length.[8] As an adult, his full height was eight cubits, six palms, and three fingers, or approximately 4.7 m.[9] Like other Egyptian deities, his hair was blue-black in colour.[10] He married his younger sister Isis, with whom he had initiated a sexual relationship while both were still in their mother's womb,[11] and was crowned king in succession to his father in Herakleopolis, adopting the fivefold titulary 'Horus powerful of arms, Two Ladies mighty in valour, Horus of Gold Osiris, King of Upper and Lower Egypt Osiris, Son of Re Wennefer the justified'.[12] One source records that he held the offices of vizier, chief priest of

[6] For the former, cf. cases where an individual acknowledges the existence of many deities, but reserves his devotion exclusively for one. This sort of attitude, monolatry, is more common in the Graeco-Roman Period than it is in earlier ones. See R. Jasnow and M. Smith, '"As for Those Who Have Called Me Evil, Mut Will Call Them Evil": Orgiastic Cultic Behaviour and its Critics in Ancient Egypt (PSI Inv. [provv.] D 114a + PSI Inv. 3056 verso)', *Enchoria* 32 (2010/11), p. 34. For attempts to compel obedience from deities, see examples cited from Theban magical texts of the Roman Period in section 7.4.9.

[7] P. Derchain, *Le Papyrus Salt 825 (B.M. 10051): Rituel pour la conservation de la vie en Égypte* (Brussels, 1965), p. 31; A. Gutbub, *Textes fondamentaux de la théologie de Kom Ombo* (Cairo, 1973), p. 13; F.-R. Herbin, 'Les premières pages du Papyrus Salt 825', *BIFAO* 88 (1988), p. 99.

[8] A. Szczudłowska, 'Liturgical Text Preserved on Sękowski Papyrus', *ZÄS* 98 (1970), p. 62.

[9] J. Yoyotte, 'Une notice biographique de roi Osiris', *BIFAO* 77 (1977), pp. 145 and 147.

[10] M. de Rochemonteix and É. Chassinat, *Le temple d'Edfou* 1 (Cairo, 1897), p. 149, line 9; M. Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)* (Oxford, 2005), p. 210.

[11] J. Quack, 'Der pränatale Geschlechtsverkehr von Isis und Osiris sowie eine Notiz zum Alter des Osiris', *SAK* 32 (2004), pp. 328–30.

[12] Yoyotte, *BIFAO* 77 (1977), pp. 145–8.

Heliopolis, and royal herald before his assumption of the throne;[13] another that he instigated a rebellion against Shu prior to his accession.[14]

At the age of twenty-eight, Osiris was murdered by his brother Seth.[15] According to some sources, the killer justified his act with the claim that he had acted in self-defence.[16] According to others, he took retribution because Osiris had engaged in an illicit affair with his wife Nephthys.[17] The offspring of this illicit union was Anubis, who is sometimes called the eldest son of Osiris.[18] A few texts say the god also had a daughter or daughters, without indicating who their mother was, by one of whom he fathered additional sons.[19] After the murder of her husband, Isis searched for and discovered his corpse, which was then reconstituted through the rites of mummification. By 'playing the role of a man' (*ỉr ṯ;y*), she was able to arouse Osiris and conceive her son Horus by him.[20] Thus a sexual relationship that began before either deity was actually born continued even after one of them had died.[21]

The child Horus was raised in secret by his mother in the marshes of Khemmis in the delta, where he was safe from Seth's attempts to find and kill him.[22] On reaching adulthood, he avenged the crime committed against Osiris. Seth was brought to justice, found guilty, and punished for his deed, while Horus was acclaimed as king and rightful successor to his father. Now vindicated against his enemy, and with the

[13] J. Osing, *Aspects de la culture pharaonique: Quatre leçons au Collège de France (février–mars, 1989)* (Paris, 1992), pp. 51–4.

[14] Derchain, *Le Papyrus Salt 825*, pp. 31–4.

[15] Quack, *SAK* 32 (2004), pp. 330–1.

[16] B. Mathieu, 'Un épisode du procès de Seth au tribunal d'Héliopolis', *Göttinger Miszellen* 164 (1998), pp. 71–8.

[17] W. Spiegelberg, *Demotische Papyrus aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1902), p. 21 and plate 95, lines 12–15; A. von Lieven, 'Seth ist im Recht, Osiris ist im Unrecht!', *ZÄS* 133 (2006), pp. 141–50; M. Smith, 'The Reign of Seth: Egyptian Perspectives from the First Millennium BCE', in L. Bareš, F. Coppens, and K. Smoláriková (eds), *Egypt in Transition: Social and Religious Development of Egypt in the First Millennium BCE* (Prague, 2010), p. 404.

[18] Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 203.

[19] D. Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta d'après le papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.84* (Cairo, 2006), pp. 21–3, 49–50, 104, and 151.

[20] For the expression *ỉr ṯ;y*, which is predicated of other goddesses in addition to Isis, see M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 119 and 141; M. Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507* (London, 1987), pp. 62–3; A. Kucharek, *Die Klagelieder von Isis und Nephthys in Texten der Griechisch-Römischen Zeit* (Heidelberg, 2010), pp. 222–6; A. Forgeau, *Horus-fils-d'Isis: La jeunesse d'un dieu* (Cairo, 2010), pp. 45–8; A. Pries, 'Geschlechtsidentitätsstörungen im altäyptischen Pantheon? Einige Bemerkungen zum Phänomen wechselnder Genuskorrelationen von Götternamen', in E. Bechtold, A. Gulyás, and A. Hasznos (eds), *From Illahun to Djeme: Papers Presented in Honour of Ulrich Luft* (Oxford, 2011), p. 228; M. Depauw, 'Notes on Transgressing Gender Boundaries in Ancient Egypt', *ZÄS* 130 (2003), p. 54; J. Yoyotte, *Histoire, géographie et religion de l'Égypte ancienne* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2013), pp. 437–8.

[21] Belief in the power of female sexuality to revivify the deceased is attested in many different cultures, both ancient and modern. Its efficacy is celebrated, for instance, in 'She Brought Life Back to the Dead', a recording made by Sonny Boy Williamson and his Houserockers for the Trumpet label (Trumpet 215) in Jackson, Mississippi on 4 December 1951.

[22] Smith in Bareš, Coppens, and Smoláriková (eds), *Egypt in Transition*, p. 405.

legitimacy of his heir firmly established, Osiris himself was installed as ruler of the underworld and its inhabitants.

This brief sketch is a composite assembled from a number of Egyptian sources of different dates and from different parts of the country. It illustrates one salient fact, however. Osiris is one of the few ancient Egyptian deities of whom it is possible to write even the outline of a biography. More personal details about him are extant than about any other god or goddess. This is not simply an accident of preservation. The Egyptians considered some deities important because of their impersonal attributes and powers, the roles they were believed to play in the maintenance of the cosmos. But the crucial significance of Osiris for them lay in what he personally had experienced. His life, death, and resurrection were perceived to be particularly momentous in relation to their own fates, and thus they figure more prominently in the textual record than do accounts of the exploits of other divinities. Moreover, because so much importance was invested in the fact that these were events actually experienced by a real individual, and not merely abstractions, personal detail was essential in recounting them.

To understand why the life, death, and resurrection of Osiris were so significant, one must first grasp how the ancient Egyptians conceived of the human being. Their conception was essentially a monistic one. They did not divide the person into a corruptible body and an immortal soul. They did, however, perceive each individual as having a 'corporeal self' and a 'social self'.[23] For both, 'connectivity' was an essential prerequisite. Just as the disparate limbs of the human body could only function effectively as parts of a properly constituted whole, so too could the individual person only function as a member of a properly structured society. Death brought about a twofold rupture, severing the links between the constituent parts of the body while at the same time isolating the deceased from the company of his or her former associates. In effect, it was a form of dismemberment, both corporeal and social.[24]

Osiris provided a model whereby the effects of this rupture could be reversed, for the god underwent a twofold process of resurrection. Just as the mummification rites restored his corporeal integrity, so too justification against Seth and the events that followed it restored his social position and reintegrated him within the hierarchy of the gods. In the same way that Osiris was restored to life and declared free of wrongdoing, so all who died hoped to be revived and justified. It is important to stress that not all of the ideas just described were in place from the very beginning. There are references to the justified deceased in our sources as early as the fifth dynasty, for example, but we have no unequivocal evidence for belief in a general judgement of the dead before the Middle Kingdom. This indicates that the concept of justification only became important later. Clearly, Egyptian aspirations for the Osirian afterlife took time to coalesce and reach their fullest form of expression. In this book, it will be our aim to trace the key stages in the development of these aspirations and see how these are reflected in the textual and archaeological records.

[23] J. Assmann, *Tod und Jenseits im alten Ägypten* (Munich, 2001), pp. 118–20.
[24] Ibid., pp. 35–9.

1

Prelude to Osiris I: Conceptions of the Afterlife in Prehistoric and Predynastic Egypt

The earliest securely dated references to Osiris occur in texts of the mid-fifth dynasty (*c.*2494–2345 BC).[1] From his very first appearance in the record the god plays a central role in Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife. But there is ample evidence to show that the Egyptians believed in a hereafter before they did Osiris. What was this hereafter like? In order to understand the background from which the deity arose, it will be helpful to investigate what the Egyptians thought would happen to them after they died prior to the time when their posthumous fate became so closely linked with him.

What is the earliest evidence for belief in an afterlife in ancient Egypt? How far back can we trace conceptions of the hereafter? In what form did the earliest Egyptians imagine they would pass their posthumous existence? What needs did they envisage the dead as having and how were these to be met? Was there a particular place or location in which they believed they would spend the afterlife and, if so, how was this reached? Was the next world inhabited by supernatural beings with whom they hoped to interact and, if so, which ones? Were there any prerequisites (e.g. good conduct in this world) for engaging in such interaction? By what means, ritual or otherwise, did the earliest Egyptians seek to ensure their transition from this life to the next? To what extent was the social structure of this world mirrored in the next one? Could the living and the dead interact? Did Egyptian ideas about the afterlife vary from one locality to another or were they more or less the same throughout the land? These are very difficult questions to answer. No texts inform us about the religious ideas of the earliest Egyptians.

In the absence of written documents, scholars have turned to other types of evidence in seeking to elucidate the first Egyptians' conceptions of the afterlife: the size, form, and location of cemeteries, tombs, and graves, the position in which a dead person was buried, the orientation of the body and the monument enclosing it, the treatment of the corpse, the objects deposited in the tomb alongside the dead, representations on tomb walls, possible traces of ritual activity, including the presence of human or animal

[1] See sections 3.2 and 3.3.

sacrifices, as well as differences between the burials of individuals of varying social status. Additionally, evidence from non-funerary contexts has been utilized, e.g. rock art from the desert regions to the east and west of the Nile Valley.

But how much can evidence of this sort really tell us about the earliest Egyptians' ideas concerning the hereafter? Can it provide answers to the questions posed above? This is what we will attempt to determine in the present chapter, which will focus upon the prehistoric and predynastic periods.

1.1. WHAT IS THE EARLIEST EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF IN AN AFTERLIFE IN ANCIENT EGYPT? HOW FAR BACK CAN WE TRACE CONCEPTIONS OF THE HEREAFTER?

1.1.1. Burial as evidence for belief in an afterlife?

The earliest known human burial from Egypt, approximately 55,000 years old, is that of a child, discovered at Taramsa Hill approximately 2.5 km southeast of the temple of Hathor at Dendera in Upper Egypt. The body of this child had been placed in a pit approximately 1 m deep. It was found in a seated position, facing east, leaning back with the head tilted upwards.[2] Although it is sometimes assumed that the practice of burial itself constitutes evidence of belief in an afterlife,[3] we should be cautious about linking the two without more explicit proof of a connection between them.[4] Some societies bury their dead but have no conception of posthumous existence. Conversely, others believe in an afterlife but do not bury their dead. Interment of a corpse can be no more than a quick and simple way to dispose of it.[5] Nor is the difference between burial and disposal always apparent, even to specialists. What some identify as graves, others think are simply rubbish pits into which bodies have been thrown for the sake of convenience.[6]

[2] P. Vermeersch, E. Paulissen, S. Stokes, C. Charlier, P. van Peer, C. Stringer, and W. Lindsay, 'A Middle Palaeolithic Burial of a Modern Human at Taramsa Hill, Egypt', *Antiquity* 72 (1998), pp. 475–84. Cf. B. Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 8 and 37; S. Hendrickx and P. Vermeersch, 'Prehistory: From the Palaeolithic to the Badarian Culture', in I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2003), p. 21.

[3] See e.g. D. Patch, 'Introduction', in D. Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art* (New Haven and London, 2011), p. 3.

[4] R. Chapman and K. Randsborg, 'Approaches to the Archaeology of Death', in R. Chapman, I. Kinnes, and K. Randsborg (eds), *The Archaeology of Death* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 8.

[5] P. Ucko, 'Ethnography and Archaeological Interpretation of Funerary Remains', *World Archaeology* 1 (1969), pp. 264–5 and 270. Cf. S. Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs: The Culture of Life and Death* (Chichester, 2011), p. 10.

[6] Contrast, for instance, the descriptions of the treatment of the bodies of children at the site of Merimda Beni Salama in Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 116–17, and J. Eiwanger, 'Merimde Beni-salame', in K. Bard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (London and New York, 1999), p. 501.

1.1.2. Deposit of grave goods as evidence for belief in an afterlife?

The second oldest human burial known from Egypt is a narrow grave found adjacent to Boulder Hill at Nazlet Khater in Upper Egypt. This was dug into the clay and covered with boulders. The burial is thought to be contemporary with a nearby chert quarry, which was in use between 34,400 and 31,500 years ago.[7] The grave was aligned from east to west. The occupant was a sub-adult male lying on his back with his head to the west, face turned slightly to the left. A bifacial axe had been placed to the right of the cranium. The axe has been described as 'the first attested piece of funerary equipment in a land that was to become the most prolific source of such grave goods'.[8] As this description implies, the practice of depositing items in a tomb so that the occupant can make use of them in the next world is well attested from later periods of Egyptian history. Thus it is often assumed that grave goods from earlier periods had the same purpose. In other words, the presence of these in a burial, however early the date, implies belief in an afterlife, one in which the dead person had need of the objects interred with him.[9]

On this interpretation, the axe described in the preceding paragraph might be interpreted as an implement intended for use in the next world. Once again, however, caution is in order, since this is by no means the only possible reason for depositing items in a grave. They may be objects that the dead person owned or valued in this life, markers of status or identity.[10] Interring articles of this sort with the dead could symbolize their owner's separation from the living.[11] Nor should one underestimate the significance of providing a burial with grave goods for the bereaved. Not only might this allow them to create a compelling image of the deceased that they could commit to memory;[12] for some, it might be a way to dispose of objects with particular emotional

[7] P. Vermeersch, G. Gijselings, and E. Paulissen, 'Discovery of the Nazlet Khater Man, Upper Egypt', *Journal of Human Evolution* 13 (1984), pp. 281–6.

[8] Midant Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 43.

[9] See e.g. T. Wilkinson, 'Before the Pyramids: Early Developments in Egyptian Royal Funerary Ideology', in S. Hendrickx, R. Friedman, K. Ciałowicz, and M. Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2004), p. 1130; Patch in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, p. 14.

[10] A. Stevenson, *The Predynastic Egyptian Cemetery of el-Gerzeh* (Leuven, 2009), p. 160; M. Pearson, *The Archaeology of Death and Burial* (Stroud, 1999), p. 10; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 10; E. Teeter, 'Model Chisel', in E. Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization* (Chicago, 2011), p. 167; N. Buchez, 'La mobilier céramique et les offrandes à caractère alimentaire au sein des dépôts funéraires prédynastiques: éléments de réflexion à partir de l'exemple d'Adaïma', *Archéo-Nil* 8 (1998), pp. 83 and 99. Ucko, *World Archaeology* 1 (1969), p. 265, cites the example of the Lugbara of Uganda, where hunters are buried with quivers, women with beads, and so on.

[11] Pearson, *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*, p. 11.

[12] Stevenson, *The Predynastic Egyptian Cemetery of el-Gerzeh*, pp. 15 and 131; A. Stevenson, 'The Aesthetics of Predynastic Egyptian Burial: Funerary Performances in the Fourth Millennium BC', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 22.1 (2007), pp. 76 and 80; A. Stevenson, 'Predynastic Burials', in W. Wendrich and J. Dieleman (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2009), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2m3463b2, p. 3; A. Stevenson, 'Social Relationships in Predynastic Burials', *JEA* 95 (2009), p. 177.

associations that they no longer wished to have near them,[13] or may even have regarded as polluted.[14] Needless to say, none of these alternative reasons for depositing grave goods is incompatible with belief in an afterlife, but the presence of such goods by itself does not constitute proof for such a belief. Whoever placed the axe next to the cranium of the young man buried at Nazlet Khater may have done so to provide him with a tool to employ in the next world, but we should be aware that this is only one of a number of possible motives for the act.

1.1.3. Difficulties involved in identifying objective proof of belief in an afterlife

It will be apparent from these two examples that our first question, what is the earliest evidence for belief in an afterlife in ancient Egypt, cannot be answered objectively or with any degree of precision. What one person accepts as evidence for such belief may well be rejected by another. Some might regard cemeteries where there is a consistent pattern of burial in terms of the position and alignment of bodies in graves as proof of belief in an afterlife. One of the earliest of these in the Nile Valley is Site 117 at Gebel Sahaba, on the east side of the river 3 km north of Wadi Halfa. Stone tools associated with the burials there suggest that they are around 12,000 years old.[15] Others might insist that only when the provisioning of graves begins to assume a fairly standardized form, as it does in some parts of Egypt in the Neolithic Period, do we have genuine proof of such belief. But there are those for whom not even this will be sufficient. Using the wealth of data collected by ethnographers and anthropologists, it is not difficult to find some cultures or societies in which a given practice does reflect a belief in the hereafter and others in which it does not, but this does not tell us whether or not the practice in question did so in prehistoric or predynastic Egypt. This is true not just of the act of burial, with or without grave goods, but of numerous other practices that will be discussed in the ensuing sections of this chapter as well.

Lacking any certain knowledge of the motivation for these, how then should we proceed? Adopting an extreme minimalist approach to the evidence will not take us very far. For our purposes it will be more constructive to ask, not whether a particular prehistoric or predynastic Egyptian practice constitutes valid evidence for belief in an afterlife or not but rather, if it does, what it can tell us about that afterlife. This is the approach that will be adopted here.

[13] Ucko, *World Archaeology* 1 (1969), p. 265, cites the example of an animal cemetery in Sussex where bereaved owners bury blankets, collars, and other items with their deceased pets.

[14] E. Köhler, 'Prehistory', in A. Lloyd (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2010), p. 34.

[15] F. Wendorf, *The Prehistory of Nubia* 2 (Dallas, 1968), pp. 954–95. Cf. Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 63–4; F. Geus, 'Burial Customs in the Upper Main Nile: An Overview', in W.V. Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa: Nubia from Prehistory to Islam* (London, 1991), p. 57.

1.2. IN WHAT FORM DID THE EARLIEST EGYPTIANS IMAGINE THEY WOULD PASS THEIR POSTHUMOUS EXISTENCE?

1.2.1. Wrapping and other treatments of the body: belief in posthumous survival in corporeal form?

Throughout most of the predynastic period the bodies of the dead were simply buried in graves, with no special effort made to treat the corpse beforehand. There are some notable exceptions, however. At el-Badari near Sohag in Middle Egypt, type site of the Badarian culture (*c.*4400–4000 BC),[16] the heads of seven bodies were found to have been wrapped in textiles, and one held a pad of cloth in his hand. Examination of the material in question suggests that it may have been impregnated with resin.[17]

Additional evidence for this type of treatment comes from the fourth millennium. Three women from the non-elite cemetery HK43 at Hierakonpolis (*c.*3600–3400 BC) had been wrapped in linen, while pads of resin-soaked cloth were used to fill out body parts, especially around the face and hands, before wrapping began.[18] In some bodies from this site, internal organs had been removed, wrapped, and replaced.[19] In others, including one of those found wrapped in linen, the cervical vertebrae had been lacerated prior to bandaging.[20] One body had been wrapped in the bark of a resin-bearing tree and balls of resin had been placed in the hands of some of the deceased.[21] Some animals in subsidiary burials in the elite cemetery HK6 at Hierakonpolis (mid-fourth millennium BC) had been wrapped in linen shrouds prior to interment as well.[22]

[16] See Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 152–66; Hendrickx and Vermeersch in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 36–40.

[17] J. Jones, 'New Perspectives on the Development of Mummification and Funerary Practices during the Pre- and Early Dynastic Periods', in J.-C. Goyon and C. Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2007), pp. 982–3. Cf. J. Jones, 'Towards Mummification: New Evidence for Early Developments', *Egyptian Archaeology* 21 (2002), pp. 6–7.

[18] R. Friedman, A. Maish, A. Fahmy, J. Darnell, and E. Johnson, 'Preliminary Report on Field Work at Hierakonpolis: 1996–1998', *JARCE* 36 (1999), p. 7; Jones, *Egyptian Archaeology* 21 (2002), pp. 6–7; Jones in Goyon and Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1, pp. 981–2.

[19] Ibid., pp. 981 and 984; R. Friedman, E. Watrall, J. Jones, A. Fahmy, W. van Neer, and V. Linseele, 'Excavations at Hierakonpolis', *Archéo-Nil* 12 (2002), pp. 65–6.

[20] Ibid., pp. 63–5; Jones in Goyon and Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1, pp. 981 and 984–5; S. Hendrickx, D. Huyge, and W. Wendrich, 'Worship Without Writing', in W. Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology* (Chichester and Malden, 2010), pp. 23–4.

[21] Jones in Goyon and Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1, pp. 983–4.

[22] W. van Neer, V. Linseele, and R. Friedman, 'Animal Burials and Food Offerings at the Elite Cemetery HK6 of Hierakonpolis', in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, pp. 99, 103, and 119; R. Friedman, 'Elephants at Hierakonpolis', ibid., pp. 138, 145–9; R. Friedman, 'The Early Royal Cemetery at Hierakonpolis: An Overview', in F. Raffaele, M. Nuzzolo, and I. Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology* (Wiesbaden, 2010), p. 72; R. Friedman, 'Hierakonpolis', in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 39.

One of these, an aurochs, had traces of resin around the jaw and ribs.[23] There is further evidence for the practice of wrapping human bodies or parts of them in strips of linen from a cemetery at Adaïma in Upper Egypt. This dates to the Naqada II Period, sometimes called Gerzean (*c.*3500–3200).[24]

A range of other methods of treating the body was employed in predynastic Egypt. A wooden support was inserted into the spinal column of a body found at Naqada, and the abdominal cavity was packed.[25] Dismemberment and manipulation of disarticulated body parts are attested in Naqada I (*c.*4000–3500) and, more frequently, Naqada II burials.[26] Sometimes the preserved remains of the dead were coloured or stained. At Gebel Ramlah in the southwestern desert, for example, some skeletons had been covered with a layer of red ochre. Missing teeth had been replaced in a few of them.[27] This cemetery dates to *c.*4500 BC. At el-Ghaba (mid-fifth millennium BC), roughly 200 km north of Khartoum in the Sudan, some skeletons showed traces of greenish colouration around teeth and facial area, which could be the result of deliberate staining.[28]

Can we infer anything about Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife from these practices? Padding individual body parts to fill them out, wrapping in linen, which was sometimes impregnated with resin, and removal, wrapping, and restoration of internal organs to the body can be seen as precursors of the mummification techniques known from Pharaonic Egypt. All clearly demonstrate a concern with preserving or restoring the integrity of the body, as do replacement of missing teeth and

[23] Van Neer, Linseele, and Friedman in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, p. 99.

[24] É. Crubézy, T. Janin, and B. Midant-Reynes, *Adaïma* 2 (Cairo, 2002), pp. 73 and 482; B. Midant-Reynes, 'The Naqada Period', in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, p. 50.

[25] See literature cited in A. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom: Philological Aspects of a Continuous Tradition in Egyptian Mortuary Literature* 1 (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2013), p. 51 note 119.

[26] See Stevenson, *The Predynastic Egyptian Cemetery of el-Gerzeh*, pp. 150–5; D. Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt: Social Transformations in North-East Africa, 10,000 to 2650 BC* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 116–19; D. Wengrow and J. Baines, 'Images, Human Bodies and the Construction of Social Memory in Late Predynastic Egypt', in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, pp. 1097–100; E. Köhler, 'Ursprung einer langen Tradition: Grab und Totenkult in der Frühzeit', in H. Guksch, E. Hofmann, and M. Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten* (Munich, 2003), p. 15; V. Tamorri, 'Manipulated Corpses in Predynastic Egyptian Tombs: Deviant or Normative Practices?', in H. Abd El Gawad, N. Andrews, M. Correas-Amador, V. Tamorri, and J. Taylor (eds), *Current Research in Egyptology 2011: Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Symposium Durham University 2011* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 204–7.

[27] R. Schild, M. Kobusiewicz, F. Wendorf, J. Irish, J. Kabaciński, and H. Królik, 'Gebel Ramlah Playa', in Jennerstrasse 8 (ed.), *Tides of the Desert—Gezeiten der Wüste: Contributions to the Archaeology and Environmental History of Africa in Honour of Rudolph Kuper* (Cologne, 2002), pp. 121–3; M. Kobusiewicz, J. Kabaciński, R. Schild, J. Irish, and F. Wendorf, 'Burial Practices of the Final Neolithic Pastoralists at Gebel Ramlah, Western Desert of Egypt', in R. Friedman and P. Fiske (eds), *Egypt at its Origins* 3 (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2011), pp. 203 and 209–10; Hendrickx, Huyge, and Wendrich in Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology*, p. 22; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 54–5; M. Bárta, *Swimmers in the Sand: On the Neolithic Origin of Ancient Egyptian Mythology and Symbolism* (Prague, 2010), p. 71.

[28] Geus in Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa*, p. 58; Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 134.

reconstruction of the spinal column. Does this mean that preservation of the corpse was deemed to be essential for survival after death? Were the deceased believed to survive in corporeal form? Possibly, but we should also consider to what extent such treatment may have been intended to enhance the appearance of the dead for the living. Stevenson cites a burial at Hierakonpolis belonging to a woman with a damaged skull where the hair had been combed over the missing part to restore her appearance as far as possible to the way she looked when alive.[29] As she notes, this was probably done for aesthetic reasons. On the other hand, operations like the removal of internal organs are unlikely to have been purely cosmetic, so preservation was equally important, if not more so, in most cases.

The practice of dismembering bodies has suggested a link with the later myth of the dismemberment of Osiris to some,[30] but we have no evidence that this myth existed at such an early date. A different theory is that dismemberment was a means of distributing the remains of individuals among a number of different places and thus permitting commemoration of that individual in more than one locality.[31] Although there is no direct connection, a similar motivation may have led to the later practice of providing kings with more than one tomb, either in different zones of the same site, symbolically representing different geographical areas, or in different places altogether.[32] As Wengrow notes, dismemberment and wrapping the corpse have two apparently contradictory aims, but they are similar in that both result in the reconfiguration of the human body.[33]

The practice of painting skeletons with red ochre calls to mind the use of red-coloured shrouds to swathe bodies in later periods of Egyptian history, reflecting the belief that the colour red possessed apotropaic powers.[34] Thus the purpose of this could have been to protect the body. A statement found in several sources to the effect that some predynastic bodies at the Nubian site of Siali were actually wrapped in red linen bandages is not supported by any evidence, to the best of my knowledge.[35] The original excavators' report says simply that some skeletons bore traces of brilliant red pigment,

[29] Stevenson, *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 22.1 (2007), p. 80; Stevenson, *The Predynastic Egyptian Cemetery of el-Gerzeh*, p. 150.

[30] See earlier works cited ibid., p. 153, and Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 118. For the dismemberment of Osiris, see J. Quack, 'Resting in Pieces and Integrating the Oikoumene: On the Mental Expansion of the Religious Landscape by Means of the Body Parts of Osiris', in J. Quack, C. Witschel, D. Frackowiak, and S. Nagel (eds), *Religious Flows in the Ancient World—The Diffusion of the Cults of Isis, Mithras and Iuppiter Dolichenus within the Imperium Romanum* (Tübingen, forthcoming).

[31] Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 121; Wengrow and Baines in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, p. 1102.

[32] Ibid., p. 1105; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 229–31.

[33] Ibid., p. 123.

[34] See M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), p. 35.

[35] See K. Goebs, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature: Royalty, Rebirth, and Destruction* (Oxford, 2008), p. 369, citing J. Taylor, 'Patterns of Colouring on Ancient Egyptian Coffins from the New Kingdom to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty', in W.V. Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2001), p. 166, in turn citing L. Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt* (Chicago, 1995), p. 57.

which they attributed to close contact with fabric impregnated with that colour, although no trace of any fabric was found in the burials.[36] They did not consider the possibility that the paint in question may have been applied directly to the body as in the cases from Gebel Ramlah described above. If the greenish discolouration around the teeth and facial area of some skeletons at el-Ghaba in the Sudan was the result of deliberate staining, this too could have been intended to benefit the deceased in some way. In Pharaonic Egypt, the colour green was associated with fertility and vegetation, and thus with the concepts of renewal and fresh life.[37]

To summarize, a range of different methods of treating the body is attested in predynastic Egypt. Although some of these may have been employed chiefly for cosmetic purposes, others look as if they were intended to help preserve or protect the corpse. Whether this was because the dead were believed to continue their existence in corporeal form and therefore bodily integrity was essential to survival in the hereafter, however, is uncertain. The phenomenon of posthumous dismemberment attested in some predynastic cemeteries suggests that it was not, or at least not in every case. We should also bear in mind that the vast majority of bodies recovered from predynastic Egypt show no signs of having undergone any of the treatments described in this section. If these were supposed to enhance the deceased's chances of survival or confer some other benefit upon them in the afterlife, then it is surprising that they were not employed more regularly.

1.2.2. Belief in posthumous survival in the form of an *akh*?

Were there any other forms in which the predynastic Egyptians imagined that the dead would survive? In Tomb 16 at the elite cemetery HK6 at Hierakonpolis (*c.*3650 BC) a pair of clay masks was discovered. These were curved to fit over the head and may have been secured by a string or cord passed through holes behind the ears. They have been described as Egypt's earliest funerary masks. Fragments of at least four additional specimens have been found in the same cemetery, although not elsewhere.[38] The purpose of these masks is obscure, although the excavator of the site, R. Friedman, does not hesitate to claim in one discussion that they were intended to transform the deceased into a glorified spirit in the afterlife,[39] and in another that they 'identify their owners as transfigured spirits with the divine qualities necessary for a successful afterlife'.[40] The

[36] G. Elliot Smith and F. Jones, *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia: Report for 1907–1908, volume 2: Report on the Human Remains* (Cairo, 1910), pp. 188–9.

[37] M. Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)* (Oxford, 2005), p. 210.

[38] Friedman in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, pp. 38–9; Friedman in Raffaele, Nuzzolo, and Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology*, p. 68; R. Friedman, 'Hierakonpolis', in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, pp. 90–1 and 226 note 18.

[39] R. Friedman, 'Predynastic Period', in Z. Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids* (Cairo, 2003), pp. 60–1.

[40] Friedman in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, p. 90.

concept of transfiguration into a spirit (Egyptian *akh*), or glorification as it is sometimes called, is a very important component of belief about the afterlife in later periods of Egyptian history. The dead were supposed to be transfigured by means of spells and rites designed explicitly for that purpose.[41] But Friedman has presented no evidence to justify connecting the Hierakonpolis masks with this concept; nor is there any to support the view that the belief was already current as early as the fourth millennium BC.[42] In any case, masks are not required for transfiguration in later periods, so there is no basis for the assumption that this was the purpose the Hierakonpolis masks were supposed to serve.

1.2.3. Belief in posthumous survival in the form of a *ka*?

The so-called Cave of Hands, located between the Kharga Oasis and the Nile Valley, receives its name from the fact that some of its walls are covered in hand prints.[43] These have been dated to the Naqada II Period or even earlier. Similar hand prints have been found in the Cave of Beasts and other caves in the Gelf Kebir region of the western desert, and in the Obayid cave near the Farafra Oasis.[44] Bárta has interpreted these as early counterparts of the *ka* arms known from later Egyptian iconography, and thinks they may constitute evidence that the concept of the *ka*, 'life-force' or 'double', attested in later periods of Egyptian history had already come into being at this time.[45] This was another aspect in which the deceased were supposed to survive, which connected them with the other members of their family, both ancestors and descendants. It was to the *ka* in particular that the offerings in the mortuary cult were directed.[46] However, hands or hand prints are not the same as arms, so the connection with the *ka* is dubious, and the presence of hand prints at the Cave of Hands and elsewhere is insufficient to prove the concept of the *ka* was known to predynastic Egyptians. If they believed that the dead would pass posthumous existence in some special form, distinct from their earthly one, this does not emerge from the evidence at our disposal.

[41] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 4–5; section 2.1.2.

[42] R. Murgano, 'The Sun and Stars Double Cult in the Old Kingdom', in J.-C. Goyon and C. Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 2 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2007), p. 1362, claims that the concept is 'physically expressed' in predynastic tombs, but the basis on which this claim is made is unclear to me.

[43] D. Darnell, 'Gravel of the Desert and Broken Pots in the Road: Ceramic Evidence from the Routes Between the Nile and the Kharga Oasis', in R. Friedman (ed.), *Egypt and Nubia: Gifts of the Desert* (London, 2002), p. 161 and plates 90–1; Bárta, *Swimmers in the Sand*, p. 89.

[44] Darnell in Friedman (ed.), *Egypt and Nubia*, p. 161; Bárta, *Swimmers in the Sand*, pp. 86, 88–9, 99, and 103.

[45] Ibid., pp. 99 and 103.

[46] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 5–6.

1.3. WHAT NEEDS DID THE EARLIEST EGYPTIANS ENVISAGE THE DEAD AS HAVING IN THE AFTERLIFE AND HOW WERE THESE TO BE MET?

Most attempts to answer this question employ objects deposited in graves as a starting point. The problems associated with using these to reconstruct conceptions of the afterlife have already been discussed in section 1.1.2. As we have seen, the view that such objects were interred with the dead so that they could have access to them in the hereafter is only one of several possible interpretations. Above all, we are faced with the difficulty of trying to ascertain whether they were deposited for the benefit of the deceased, the living, or both.

1.3.1. Description of grave goods deposited in predynastic burials

Grave goods are relatively rare in burials in the Nile Valley prior to the fifth millennium BC.[47] Only in the Badarian Period do they begin to appear with any regularity. Objects found in Badarian graves include a distinctive form of red-polished, black-topped pottery made from Nile silt. Personal items were also placed in graves, among them rectangular or oval siltstone cosmetic palettes, needles, pins, combs, hairpins, jewellry made from bone and ivory, girdles and belts composed of steatite beads, linen garments, stone weapons, and other implements like arrowheads, blades, and scrapers.[48] Female figurines made of clay or ivory were found in three graves at el-Badari.[49] Figures of animals and model boats have been discovered in Badarian tombs as well.[50]

In the Naqada I Period grave goods become more diverse and elaborate.[51] The characteristic black-topped pottery found in Badarian graves gradually begins to disappear, replaced by red-polished vessels with decoration painted in white (White Cross-Lined or C-Ware). The designs include animals, birds, human figures, and boats. Scenes of hunting and combat are frequent. Other grave goods include figurines, both

[47] For a survey of such burials, see Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 63–5, 82, and 91–6.

[48] For overviews of Badarian grave goods, see ibid., pp. 153–5; Hendrickx and Vermeersch in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 37–8; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 50–4; A. Spencer, *Early Egypt: The Rise of Civilisation in the Nile Valley* (London, 1993), pp. 22–7.

[49] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 155–8; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 55–6; R. Linghu, 'Religious Beliefs as Seen from Predynastic Burial Customs in Egypt', in C. Eyre (ed.), *Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists* (Leuven, 1998), p. 685.

[50] For boat models in Badarian graves, see A. Radwan, 'Ein Jenseitsboot der 1. Dynastie aus Abusir—Teil 1', in E.-M. Engel, V. Müller, and U. Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand: Streiflichter aus Ägyptens Geschichte zu Ehren von Günter Dreyer* (Wiesbaden, 2008), p. 561; Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 158.

[51] See ibid., pp. 170–5 and 179–81; Midant-Reynes in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 45–8; Spencer, *Early Egypt*, pp. 27–33, for overviews.

male and female,[52] siltstone cosmetic palettes of various shapes, needles, awls, combs, spoons, bracelets, rings, and other objects made of bone or ivory, pins, beads, and other small items made of copper, as well as vessels, disc-shaped mace heads, and blades of stone.

Naqada II grave goods include new types of pottery, one made of marl clay and decorated with ochre-brown designs against a cream background (Decorated or D-Ware). This ultimately replaces the white-decorated red ware of Naqada I. The designs include both geometrical and representational forms. Among the latter, birds, animals, and boats, some with human figures on board, are especially prominent. Another characteristic pottery form is made of coarse brownish-red fabric. A third type has distinctive wavy handles. Stone vessels become more common in graves. Cosmetic palettes continue to appear but assume simpler rhomboidal or rectangular shapes. Some are decorated with reliefs. Disc-shaped mace heads are replaced by pear-shaped ones. A wider range of copper items is evident, for example, axe heads, blades, and items of jewellry like bracelets and rings, and there is an increased use of gold, silver, and other exotic 'luxury' materials as well. Amulets made of bone, ivory, and various stones were also deposited in graves.[53] A small number of burials included female figurines with upraised arms. These resemble the female figures depicted on contemporary pottery.[54]

New types of grave goods appear in Naqada III (*c.*3200–3000), and some older types disappear. Relief carving, on palettes and other objects, becomes more common. Painted pottery starts to die out, replaced by other forms like large red-polished jars, and stone vessels become even more popular than before. Copper is used for an even wider range of purposes, and there is an increase in the numbers of amulets and items of jewellry. Finally, seals make an appearance for the first time and their presence quickly becomes widespread.[55]

1.3.2. Significance of grave goods deposited in predynastic burials for the deceased

If, as in later periods of Egyptian history, the dead were meant to benefit from the objects buried with them, then it is probable that those who provided the sort of grave goods described in section 1.3.1 envisaged an afterlife in which the deceased had the same material needs as they did in this world. To judge from the number of pottery vessels recovered from predynastic graves, sustenance must have been a top priority.

[52] These were found in only a few tombs, not notable for other grave goods. Some had as many as sixteen. See Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 175–6.

[53] For overviews of Naqada II grave goods, see ibid., pp. 187–96; Midant-Reynes in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 50–1; Spencer, *Early Egypt*, pp. 36–47.

[54] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 196–7.

[55] See ibid., pp. 234–6; Spencer, *Early Egypt*, pp. 49–51.

Many of these vessels show signs of prior use.[56] Some actually contain the residue of food or drink. Others are empty. Vessels have also been discovered containing sand, charcoal, ash, or gravel.[57] This could suggest that symbolic or dummy offerings were considered to be just as effective for the purpose of providing sustenance in the hereafter as the real thing.

Although it is generally assumed that pottery vessels were deposited in graves to provide nourishment for their occupants, they could have possessed a wider significance as well, for example, as markers of status and identity.[58] A pot may have been a personal possession of the deceased.[59] Obviously, a vessel or group of vessels could have served more than one of these functions. Vessels may also have been used to contain the remains of a funerary feast shared by participants in the burial. In that case, the reason for their deposit in the grave was not primarily to benefit the occupant.[60] Hendrickx, Huyge, and Wendrich observe that, although the types of pottery found in Naqada Period graves were all found in settlements as well and thus not specifically funerary, not all types attested in settlements were found in graves. According to them this indicates a vision of the afterlife which presupposed the availability of goods for consumption but not a replication of daily life in which the dead had to work to produce them.[61]

If the sort of mundane objects frequently found in graves, e.g. tools, weapons, clothing, jewellry, household articles, and so on, were placed there so that the dead could use them in the next world, then presumably they were supposed to serve the same purposes as they did in the world of the living, which could suggest that posthumous existence was envisaged as being broadly similar to this life. However, some think that certain types of grave goods, e.g. the human figurines occasionally found in burials, may have been intended to confer special powers or benefits upon the dead.[62] Various explanations have been offered for these. Some think female figurines in which the genital region is emphasized may have been employed to enhance fertility or promote rebirth in the hereafter. Other figures, it has been theorized, were supposed to work as servants for the deceased. There is no compelling evidence to prove either was the case. Both explanations borrow concepts only attested in later periods of Egypt's history and project them back in time to the predynastic. Midant-Reynes has

[56] A. Stevenson, 'Material Culture of the Predynastic Period', in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 69; Buchez, *Archéo-Nil* 8 (1998), p. 86.

[57] On the possible functions of such vessels, see ibid., p. 91; Stevenson in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 69; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 122–3.

[58] Pearson, *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*, p. 10; Buchez, *Archéo-Nil* 8 (1998), p. 100.

[59] Ibid., p. 83.

[60] For such feasts in the earlier periods of Egyptian history, see G. Tassie, 'Funerary Feasts and the Function of Early Offering-Dishes', *Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie* 13/14 (2010), pp. 65–7.

[61] Hendrickx, Huyge, and Wendrich in Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology*, p. 23.

[62] For such figurines, see D. Patch, 'The Human Figure', in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, pp. 97–135; Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 155–8, 175–8, 196–7, 222, and 229; Linghu in Eyre (ed.), *Seventh International Congress*, p. 685. Patch gives a comprehensive overview of the different types of figurine and illustrates several specimens.

raised the possibility that some figurines may have been intended to represent the deceased themselves. In one instance cited by her a figurine mimics the physical abnormalities of the occupant of the tomb in which it was deposited.[63] As she admits, however, this takes place 'within a cognitive system that is still totally obscure to us'.[64]

The human form is also represented by so-called tusk or tag figurines found in predynastic tombs.[65] These were probably originally worn as amulets by the living. Some have holes, loops, or grooves that would allow them to be suspended from the neck by a string or cord. A pair of bone amulets in the form of jackals was discovered on the chest of a child in a tomb dating *c.*3650–3300 BC at Mostagedda. Patch suggests that these were intended to protect the body, presumably by analogy with the later jackal god Anubis, the guardian of the mummy.[66] If this is correct, the question arises whether the function of the amulets was merely to deter jackals or other animals from digging up the burial, or whether it was to safeguard the deceased against malign supernatural forces. Conceivably, they were intended to do both. In any case the dead were thought to require the protection of amulets. But since these were employed by the living as well, their presence in graves cannot be used to argue that the hereafter was envisaged as being in any way different to this life.

1.4. WAS THERE A PARTICULAR PLACE OR LOCATION IN WHICH PREDYNASTIC EGYPTIANS BELIEVED THEY WOULD SPEND THE AFTERLIFE AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THIS LIKE AND HOW WAS IT REACHED?

1.4.1. The west as an abode of the dead?

The orientation of bodies in burials has often used as a basis for attempts to reconstruct ideas about the afterlife. Mace has described it as 'a dangerously fascinating field for theorizing'.[67] Not surprisingly therefore, the literature on this subject, both Egyptological and non-Egyptological, is considerable.[68] From the fifth millennium onward, the dominant pattern of body orientation in predynastic Egyptian burials was head to south facing west, although this was by no means invariable. Since in Pharaonic times the west was regarded as the abode of the dead,[69] some view this orientation as proof that Egyptians of earlier periods thought likewise. But more and more exceptions to

[63] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 175. [64] Ibid., p. 197.
[65] Patch in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, pp. 132–5.
[66] D. Patch, 'From Land to Landscape', in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, p. 50.
[67] A.C. Mace, *The Early Dynastic Cemeteries of Naga-ed-Dêr* 2 (Leipzig, 1909), p. 32.
[68] For ancient Egypt, see M. Raven, 'Egyptian Concepts on the Orientation of the Human Body', *JEA* 91 (2005), pp. 40–1, with references to earlier literature. Evidence from other cultures is surveyed in Ucko, *World Archaeology* 1 (1969), pp. 271–3, and Pearson, *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*, p. 54.
[69] See section 2.3.2.

this pattern begin to appear in Naqada II and Naqada III. If the pattern really does reflect a predynastic belief in the west as the land of posthumous existence which continued into later times, then it is difficult to explain why there is more and more deviation from it the closer we move in time to the beginning of the Egyptian state. Moreover, there are other possible reasons why the deceased may have been buried head to south facing west. Alignment of the body so that the head was to the south may have been the most important consideration. The south was the direction from which the Nile River flowed. Later on in Egyptian history the south took precedence over the other cardinal points, so in theory it could have had some sort of symbolic significance even at this early date.[70] Given this alignment, since most bodies were placed on their left side, the dead would face west as a matter of course.

1.4.2. A watery abode of the dead?

At the so-called Cave of Swimmers and Cave of Beasts in the Gelf Kebir region in the western desert many small human figures are depicted. Bárta believes that these are shown in the act of swimming and that one has here precursors of scenes in later compositions like the Book of Gates and Amduat where the deceased are said to be immersed (*mḥi*) or swimming (*nbi*) in the water.[71] If so, then this would imply that those who painted these scenes envisaged a watery abode of the dead, or at least one in which there were watery regions. However Bárta's identification of the figures as swimmers is problematic. It is by no means clear that they are immersed in water, and even if it were, there is no evidence that the setting in which they appear is the next world.

1.4.3. A celestial abode of the dead reached by boat?

Model boats have been discovered in Badarian, Naqada I, and Naqada II burials. Some of these contain a small figure lying in contracted position which is generally assumed to be a corpse.[72] Boats are also frequently depicted on pottery vessels found in graves, especially Decorated Ware, and are a common motif in predynastic rock art.[73] More boats are represented in Tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis, the so-called 'painted tomb'.[74]

[70] Raven, *JEA* 91 (2005), pp. 39–41. [71] Bárta, *Swimmers in the Sand*, pp. 59 and 63.

[72] E. Brunner-Traut, 'Drei altägyptische Totenboote und vorgeschichtliche Bestattungsgefässe (Negade II)', *RdE* 27 (1975), pp. 41–6; G. Graff, *Les peintures sur vases de Nagada I–Nagada II: Nouvelle approche sémiologique de l'iconographie prédynastique* (Leuven, 2009), pp. 54–5.

[73] F. Lankester, *Desert Boats: Predynastic and Pharaonic Era Rock-Art in Egypt's Central Eastern Desert* (Oxford, 2013).

[74] The literature on this is vast; see references cited by Patch in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, p. 221 note 64, to which add Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 206–10; R. Friedman, 'The Cemeteries of Hierakonpolis', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 21–2; E. Avi-Yonah, 'To See the God…Reflections on the Iconography of the Decorated Tomb in Ancient Hierakonpolis', *Papers for Discussion* 2 (1985), pp. 7–82; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 114–15; S. Hendrickx, 'Iconography of the Predynastic and

This dates to Naqada IIC (*c.*3300 BC). It measures 5.85 × 2.85 m, and is 1.5 m deep. The tomb is lined with mud brick; a free-standing brick wall divides the interior into two zones of equal size. It takes its name from a series of depictions on the west wall and the southern face of the interior dividing wall, painted in black, white, and red on an ochre background. These are dominated by six large boats.

Some have interpreted the model boats found in graves as evidence of a belief that the afterlife involved a boat journey of some sort.[75] A few think that these are specifically solar boats and that they were placed in the grave to allow the dead to travel in the bark of the sun god.[76] The difficulty with this theory is that there is no unequivocal evidence for belief in a solar deity in Egypt until the third dynasty.[77] The model boats could have been meant to transport the dead to the next world, but it is equally possible that they relate to this one, depicting the means by which the deceased were conveyed to the cemetery, so there may be no connection with the hereafter.

Boats depicted in rock art have likewise been interpreted either as solar barks or as vessels in which the deceased journeyed to the next world. We have already noted the difficulty with the first theory.[78] The second is equally problematic. Adherents of this view have identified certain figures depicted in boat scenes in rock art either as corpses or as participants in a funeral or a journey to the next world. But these identifications are either implausible or else open to alternative explanations. Thus Wilkinson identifies four objects projecting from the cabin of a boat depicted at the site of Kanais in the eastern desert as the feet of corpses being ferried to the land of the dead. But as he himself admits, they look more like the ends of golf clubs than anything else.[79]

Early Dynastic Periods', in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, pp. 76–7 (with good illustration); Spencer, *Early Egypt*, pp. 36–40.

[75] Köhler in Guksch, Hofmann, and Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten*, pp. 15–16; Brunner-Traut, *RdE* 27 (1975), p. 42.

[76] A. Saied, 'Der Sonnenkult und der Sonnengott in der Vor- und Frühgeschichte Ägyptens', in K. Daoud, S. Bedier, and S. Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2 (Cairo, 2005), p. 288. Cf. Patch in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, pp. 63, 66, and 224 note 139.

[77] The existence of a solar deity in predynastic and early dynastic Egypt is often assumed in books and articles on the periods in question. Typical is Patch in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, p. 77, who says that although the sun god is not attested until the Old Kingdom, the sun must have been the subject of veneration before then. J. Cervelló-Autuori, 'The Sun-Religion in the Thinite Age: Evidence and Political Significance', in Friedman and Fiske (eds), *Egypt at its Origins* 3, pp. 1125–49, thinks there was already a sun god in the first dynasty, a view shared by C. Reader, 'The Netjerikhet Stela and the Early Dynastic Cult of Ra', *JEA* 100 (2014), pp. 426–8. However, the earliest unequivocal and securely dated evidence for belief in the solar deity Re is the personal name Hesire borne by an official of the third dynasty king Djoser. See J. Kahl, '*Re is my Lord': Searching for the Rise of the Sun God at the Dawn of Egyptian History* (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 4–5 and 29–31. In that work, Kahl argues that the cult of Re was already in existence during the second dynasty, but this view has met with a mixed reception. Compare the positive review of his book by H. Altenmüller, *Lingua Aegyptia* 16 (2008), pp. 331–3, with the more sceptical ones of T. Wilkinson, *BiOr* 65 (2008), pp. 637–40, and S. Quirke, *JEA* 95 (2009), pp. 299–300.

[78] For further problems with the solar interpretation of these boats, see Lankester, *Desert Boats*, p. 109.

[79] T. Wilkinson, *Genesis of the Pharaohs: Dramatic New Discoveries that Rewrite the Origins of Ancient Egypt* (London, 2003), p. 153.

If these are corpses, why are they not in contracted position like those shown in some model boats?[80]

In two instances a representation of a boat is accompanied by a star, which Wilkinson claims guided the dead on their voyage to the afterlife, and may even have been their ultimate destination.[81] But there is no evidence to link depictions of this sort with the hereafter. Another view is that scenes involving boats in rock art are connected with hunting. They do not depict actual expeditions, but illustrate the theme of control over chaos and chaotic forces.[82] A similar interpretation has been proposed for the boats in the painted tomb at Hierakonpolis.[83] Midant-Reynes, on the other hand, suggests that the boats in the latter may simply be representations of vessels that belonged to the tomb owner when he was alive,[84] while acknowledging 'No one yet appears to have come up with a satisfactory interpretation of the way in which these images should be read.'[85]

Some assume that if an object is deposited in a tomb or grave, then its decoration must relate in some way to the afterlife. Thus Hendrickx and Eyckerman, while denying that representations of boats in rock art have any connection with the hereafter, argue they do have such a connection when depicted on grave goods like Decorated pottery. According to them, an iconographic element only receives its specific meaning in combination with other elements or through the context in which it occurs, in this instance that of the tomb.[86] But many items deposited in graves throughout the period covered by our survey have no specific connection with the afterlife, so the fact that an object has been found in a tomb does not mean that its decoration has to refer to the next world.

To summarize, there is no convincing evidence for belief in a separate land of the dead in predynastic Egypt, whether in the west, among the stars, or anywhere else. Nor is there any support for the idea that the deceased had to voyage through the cosmos in boats to arrive at their domicile in the hereafter. Slit-like openings were made in the interior walls separating the chambers of tomb U-j (*c.*3150 BC) and other large tombs in Cemetery U at Abydos. It has been suggested that these may have been intended as doors to allow the tomb owner to move from one room to another within

[80] Cf. the position of the bodies in the model boats depicted in Brunner-Traut, *RdE* 27 (1975), pp. 43 (plate 1) and 47 (plate 2a–b).

[81] Wilkinson, *Genesis of the Pharaohs*, pp. 157–8.

[82] S. Hendrickx and M. Eyckerman, 'Continuity and Change in the Visual Representations of Predynastic Egypt', in Raffaele, Nuzzolo, and Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology*, pp. 130–1; Hendrickx in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 81; Lankester, *Desert Boats*, pp. 111–21.

[83] B. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (London and New York, 1989), p. 47; M. Bárta, *Journey to the West: The World of the Old Kingdom Tombs in Ancient Egypt* (Prague, 2011), pp. 33–4.

[84] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 209.

[85] Ibid., p. 208.

[86] Hendrickx and Eyckerman in Raffaele, Nuzzolo, and Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology*, pp. 129–30 and 133. Cf. Hendrickx in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 81.

the structure.[87] If so, then the fact that there are no slits permitting entrance or exit could mean that, at this site at least, the dead were regarded as being confined to the tomb.

1.5. WAS THE NEXT WORLD INHABITED BY SUPERNATURAL BEINGS WITH WHOM THE PREDYNASTIC EGYPTIANS HOPED TO INTERACT AND, IF SO, WHICH ONES?

As we have seen, there is no basis for the claim that the deceased hoped to join the sun god in his bark, since that deity is not attested until much later in Egyptian history. Were there any other deities associated with the afterlife in predynastic Egypt? A large white headless figure is depicted on a wall in the Cave of Beasts in the Gelf Kebir region in the western desert. Two elongated red figures are beneath it, while a third stands to the left of it. Bárta identifies these as precursors of the later deities Nut, Geb, Shu, and Tefnut respectively, comparing representations from Pharaonic Egypt in which Shu is shown supporting Nut while Geb reclines beneath her.[88] In my view, this interpretation is problematic for a number of reasons. The scene in the Cave of Beasts bears little resemblance to the later ones with which Bárta compares it. The position of the arms of his 'proto-Nut' is totally different to that of the goddess's arms in the Pharaonic depictions, since the former holds one hand up to its face while in the latter both arms of the goddess are extended.[89] Nor is it evident that the two red figures beneath this figure are actually supporting it as Bárta says they are. In any case, Geb does not support Nut in later depictions. Finally, it is not clear why the figure to the left of the large white one should be identified as Tefnut. Its sex is indeterminate. In all key respects it is identical with the two supposed male figures in the scene. Moreover, Tefnut does not normally appear in the later scenes that Bárta compares with this one. In fact there is nothing to indicate that any of these figures are deities or that they have any connection with the hereafter. As far as we can judge there is no evidence of deities specifically associated with the afterlife at this time. This does not necessarily mean that there were none, but if there were these are unknown to us. Given the paucity of evidence, it is entirely possible that in the period covered by our survey, the Egyptians conceived of an afterlife without any gods.

[87] G. Dreyer, 'Tomb U-J: A Royal Burial of Dynasty 0 at Abydos', in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, pp. 129–30; Wilkinson in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, pp. 1131–2; L. Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos: Two Funerary Enclosures from the Reign of Aha* (Wiesbaden, 2009), pp. 12–13.

[88] Bárta, *Swimmers in the Sand*, pp. 41 and 48–51.

[89] The position of the arms is shown inaccurately in the line drawing in figure 18 on p. 48 of his book.

1.6. WERE THERE ANY PREREQUISITES (E.G. GOOD CONDUCT IN THIS WORLD) FOR ENGAGING IN SUCH INTERACTION?

Since there is no evidence for any hoped-for interaction with the divine world in the afterlife in predynastic Egypt, the answer has to be no. More generally, there is nothing to suggest that survival after death was in any way dependent upon morality, or that different posthumous fates awaited the virtuous and the wicked. Bárta has compared certain images depicting headless creatures in the Cave of Beasts with the guardians of the underworld who feed upon the dead in Egyptian texts of later periods, or with the devouring monster who consumes sinners shown in the vignette of Book of the Dead Spell 125. Thus he ascribes an ethical message to these representations: only the good may enter the afterlife.[90] But it is difficult to see how creatures with no head or mouth can devour anything. Nor can we be certain that the figures depicted around them are actually meant to be dead. Bárta goes on to propose that these creatures may have been deliberately portrayed in mutilated form in order to neutralize their power and render them harmless.[91] If their function was to punish sinners, however, it is hard to see why this should have been felt necessary by those who decorated the cave.

1.7. BY WHAT MEANS, RITUAL OR OTHERWISE, DID THE EARLY EGYPTIANS SEEK TO ENSURE THEIR TRANSITION FROM THIS LIFE TO THE NEXT?

1.7.1. The evidence of body position in the grave. Was the contracted or semi-contracted position supposed to stimulate rebirth?

It was normal for bodies to be buried in contracted or semi-contracted position throughout the predynastic period and even beyond.[92] Such burials have been found in both Egypt and the Sudan. In the fifth millennium they are attested at Merimda and el-Omari in the north, at various Badarian sites in Middle and Upper Egypt, in the Sudan, and at sites like Gebel Ramlah in the western desert. In the fourth millennium, they are found at northern sites like Maadi and Heliopolis, and are characteristic of the

[90] Bárta, *Swimmers in the Sand*, pp. 62–3, 65, and 91. [91] Ibid., pp. 64 and 67.

[92] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 139, says that the contracted position was only abandoned when mummification became more prevalent because a contracted body could not be mummified. Cf. Raven, *JEA* 91 (2005), p. 40. For persistence of the contracted position into later times, see also J. Bourriau, 'Change of Body Position in Egyptian Burials from the Mid-XIIth Dynasty until the Early XVIIIth Dynasty', in H. Willems (ed.), *Social Aspects of Funerary Culture in the Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Leuven, Paris, and Sterling, 2001), pp. 1–20; Brunner-Traut, *RdE* 27 (1975), p. 42.

Naqada culture as well, although in the later phases, from Naqada II onwards, there begins to be more variation. The contracted or semi-contracted position is also typical of Lower Nubian A Group burials.

The position in which a body is placed within a grave is sometimes used as evidence for a group or society's ideas about the afterlife. One of the most common suppositions is that the flexed or contracted position, often referred to as the foetal position, indicates a conception of life after death as a form of rebirth. Thus the dead are reborn into the next world, and placing them in a position associated with gestation is somehow supposed to assist in this process.[93]

Alternative interpretations are not lacking, however. Some, e.g. Kees, have argued that the contracted position was employed for purely practical reasons in predynastic Egypt. A body in this posture took up less space and so the grave could be smaller.[94] Another explanation is that the contracted position reflects the normal one adopted for sleep by people accustomed to spending the night in the open air.[95] Some support for this idea may be forthcoming from the fact that in a number of Badarian contracted burials a pillow of straw or animal skin was placed beneath the head,[96] and some predynastic bodies were actually laid on what appear to be primitive beds.[97] Alternatively, this position may have been chosen because in life it ensures the maximum amount of protection for the body; thus it conveyed an image of comfort and security to the minds of those who performed the burial. We should remember that burial is as much for the living as for the deceased.

The idea of being reborn into the next life is actually well attested in texts from later periods of Egyptian history, for example the New Kingdom,[98] by which time the custom of burying the dead in contracted position had long been abandoned, so one

[93] See e.g. Geus in Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa*, p. 58; Köhler in Guksch, Hofmann, and Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten*, p. 16; F. Hassan, 'Between Man and Goddess: The Fear of Nothingness and Dismemberment', in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, pp. 784 and 786; Wilkinson, ibid., p. 1130; Bárta, *Swimmers in the Sand*, p. 101; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 18; H. Hays, 'The Death of the Democratization of the Afterlife', in N. Strudwick and H. Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC* (Oxford, 2011), p. 130; Brunner-Traut, *RdE* 27 (1975), p. 45.

[94] H. Kees, *Totenglauben und Jenseitsvorstellungen der alten Ägypter* (Leipzig, 1926), pp. 21–2; C. Theis, *Deine Seele zum Himmel, dein Leichnam zur Erde* (Hamburg, 2011), p. 22. Cf. Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 9–10. For arguments against this view, see Brunner-Traut, *RdE* 27 (1975), pp. 42–5.

[95] G. Bergamini, 'Religious and Funerary Practices in Egypt Prior to the Pharaohs', in A.M. Donadoni Roveri (ed.), *Egyptian Civilization: Religious Beliefs* (Turin, 1988), p. 27; Brunner-Traut, *RdE* 27 (1975), pp. 45–6.

[96] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 153. A. Arkell, *Early Khartoum: An Account of the Excavation of an Early Occupation Site* (London and New York, 1949), pp. 31 and 34, notes one particular burial from that site (M 21) in which a potsherd had been placed beneath the head of the deceased.

[97] G. Killen, *Ancient Egyptian Furniture* 1 (Warminster, 1980), p. 23. Manon Schutz will include a catalogue and analysis of predynastic beds in her Oxford DPhil thesis on beds and sleep in ancient Egypt, now in progress.

[98] See e.g. J. Assmann, 'Die Inschrift auf dem äußeren Sargdeckel des Merenptah', *MDAIK* 28 (1972), pp. 47–73; J. Assmann, 'Neith spricht als Mutter und Sarg', *MDAIK* 28 (1972), pp. 115–39. Note the use of *swḏ.t*, 'egg', as a designation of the coffin at this time (*Wb*. 4, 74, 4).

did not necessarily entail the other. Even if the earliest Egyptians did have a conception of posthumous rebirth, that custom need not have been an expression of it, or a means of facilitating the process. Evidently the phenomenon of contracted burials is a significant one, although what, if anything, it expresses about the ideas concerning the afterlife held by those who interred the bodies of the dead in this position in the earliest periods of Egyptian history cannot be established with any certainty. As shown above, various possible explanations can be proposed, but we have no way of determining which one is correct.

1.7.2. Wrapping in animal skins as a stimulus to rebirth?

As early as the fifth millennium BC, mats or animal skins were used to cover the body in graves. One obvious function of these was to protect or conceal what they covered. In this respect they were precursors of the later coffin, by which they were eventually replaced. Some have argued that the animal skin was a symbol of rebirth and rejuvenation as well. They associate the skins used in predynastic burials with the *imiut*-symbol, a headless skin mounted on a pole attested in representations from the reign of the first dynasty king Aha onwards, which was sometimes linked to regeneration in later periods of Egyptian history.[99] According to this view, wrapping the deceased in animal skins was supposed to assist them to be reborn in the afterlife.

This idea is not supported by the archaeological evidence, however. First of all, wherever they have been discovered, bodies covered with animal skins were found in conjunction with those covered with mats. This suggests that mat and animal skin were simply alternative methods of enclosing and protecting the body. Moreover, the former was sometimes preferred to the latter. At some sites, e.g. el-Omari, burials in which an animal skin covered the body were in a distinct minority.[100] If special regenerative properties really were attributed to the animal skin, then it is difficult to see why it was not used more extensively, or in preference to the mat. Another problem is that in some Badarian and Naqada I burials, mats or skins covered not just the body but associated grave goods as well. Why should this be so if the purpose of the skin was to rejuvenate the corporeal remains of the deceased? In addition to protecting the body, mats and skins also enclosed it in a separate space within the burial, and certain types of grave goods could be included in this space as well.[101]

A further difficulty with the theory that the animal skin was a precursor of the later *imiut* is that the practice of covering bodies with such skins was already becoming obsolete during the Naqada II period, well before the earliest confirmed attestation of

[99] See Graff, *Les peintures sur vases de Nagada I–Nagada II*, pp. 100–2; G. Graff, 'Les peintures sur vases de Nagada I–Nagada II: Nouvelle approche sémiologique', in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, p. 774.

[100] See B. Mortensen, 'el-Omari', in Bard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, p. 593; J. Dębowska-Ludwin, *Early Burial Customs in Northern Egypt* (Oxford, 2013), p. 23.

[101] Cf. Köhler in Guksch, Hofmann, and Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten*, p. 18.

that symbol, so there is no continuity between the two. Logan has drawn attention to a possible representation of the *imiut* on a Naqada IIC–D vessel, but he argues that this and the other earliest examples depict the entrails of a bird, not an animal skin, mounted on a pole, According to him, the replacement of these by the animal skin is a later development, as is the association of the symbol with death and burial.[102]

1.7.3. Animal skins on poles and other figures on decorated pottery

Some believe that the figures painted on pottery deposited in tombs, especially so-called Decorated pottery or D-Ware which characterizes the Naqada II Period, were likewise meant to expedite the regeneration of the dead in the afterlife. The figures in question include those of women, trees, boats, animal skins on poles, and addaxes (a type of antelope).[103] We have no way of knowing whether this interpretation is correct or not, but it does have some problematic aspects. First, like so many others, it is founded on the belief that concepts only attested in later periods of Egyptian history, for example, that of the tree as dispenser of life, can be freely extrapolated back into predynastic times. Second, the interpretation assumes that painted pictures were believed to possess the same powers as the objects that they represented. This may well have been the case. But there is a consequent danger that, if we err in attributing to the Egyptians a belief that a given object possessed a certain power, then we will err in assuming that representations of that object were thought to possess it as well.

The difficulty is nicely illustrated by the animal skins on poles depicted on many predynastic pottery vessels. It is often assumed that these are two-dimensional representations of the skins in which the dead were sometimes wrapped. Those functioned as wombs or matrices in which the dead, lying in foetal position, underwent a second gestation, according to one interpretation, therefore representations of them must have promoted rebirth as well.[104] But if in reality, neither the contracted position of the dead nor the skins in which they were sometimes wrapped had anything to do with the concept of rebirth,[105] then there is no justification for the attribution of regenerative powers to representations of animal skins on pots.

1.7.4. Evidence for rituals and ritual implements?

Did the earliest Egyptians employ specific rituals to facilitate or ensure the transition from this life to the next, as was the case in later periods of Egyptian history? Ritual is

[102] T. Logan, 'The Origins of the *Jmy-wt* Fetish', *JARCE* 27 (1990), pp. 67 and 69.

[103] Hendrickx in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, pp. 79 and 178; Graff, *Les peintures sur vases de Nagada I–Nagada II*, pp. 122–4. For a description of the addax, see R. Hoath, *A Field Guide to the Mammals of Egypt* (Cairo and New York, 2009), pp. 147–9.

[104] Graff, *Les peintures sur vases de Nagada I–Nagada II*, p. 102.

[105] See sections 1.7.1 and 1.7.2.

an important adjunct to belief, and there is no shortage of references to ritual in discussions of material from predynastic cemeteries and graves. Wengrow, for instance, makes frequent reference to rituals from this period. According to him, during the fifth millennium BC funerary rites took on a strikingly similar form throughout much of Egypt and the Sudan.[106] During Naqada IIC–D, he says, display-oriented funerary rituals spread northwards from the Nile Valley into Lower Egypt.[107] He maintains that grave goods had different values than the same objects in everyday life. They acquired different meanings through rituals in relation to the deceased and the group conducting the burial. Thus ritual created a relationship between the object and the dead person.[108] He also believes that the walls of the painted tomb at Hierakonpolis were decorated as part of a ritual, which he says must have been a collective performance involving a number of different participants rather than a single painter.[109] Likewise, Friedman thinks that the ceramic masks and other objects found at Hierakonpolis attest to elaborate and extensive funerary rituals.[110]

Unfortunately, nowhere do Wengrow or Friedman ever explain what these rituals were, how they were conducted, or by whom. Nor do they define what they mean by the term 'ritual'. What is the difference, for instance, between a ritual and a custom or practice? Religious acts need not be ritual, just as ritual acts need not be religious.[111] Graff has argued that since at this time there was no sharp distinction between sacred and profane, virtually every sort of activity, hunting, planting crops, making bread, and so on, could have had a ritual aspect. At the same time, she distinguishes activities like these from 'purer' ritual acts, which had no pragmatic or rational function outside the rite itself.[112]

Some rituals may leave a tangible trace at the place of burial, capable of being recorded by the archaeologist, but so may other types of activity. How does one distinguish between them? It is telling that whereas Wengrow regards the decoration of the underground chambers of Tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis as a ritual act, in which the painted scenes were effectively 'buried' to create an image below ground,[113] Friedman views this as a practical measure motivated by the desire to protect the scenes from the destruction suffered by above-ground monuments, perhaps connected with the removal of the elite cemetery there to another site.[114] This example shows that ritual cannot be inferred from material remains alone, because without texts to guide us we have no sure way of knowing why, how, or in what context something has been done.

[106] Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 27. [107] Ibid., p. 38. [108] Ibid., p. 108.

[109] Ibid., p. 115; D. Wengrow, 'The Invention of Writing in Egypt', in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 100.

[110] Friedman in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, pp. 90–1. On these masks, see section 1.2.2.

[111] C. Renfrew, 'The Archaeology of Ritual, of Cult, and of Religion', in E. Kyriakidis (ed.), *The Archaeology of Ritual* (Los Angeles, 2007), pp. 111–13; E. Kyriakidis, 'Finding Ritual: Calibrating the Evidence', ibid., pp. 16–18.

[112] Graff, *Les peintures sur vases de Nagada I–Nagada II*, pp. 79–80.

[113] Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 115.

[114] Friedman, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 21–2.

A few objects discovered in predynastic graves have been identified as ritual implements. One of these, the bifurcated or fishtail knife, resembles the *peseshkef*, an object used in the Opening of the Mouth Ritual, a ceremony designed to reanimate the deceased, in later periods of Egyptian history.[115] This has led some to claim that a precursor of that rite was already being performed in the predynastic period.[116] But another view, based on the archaeological contexts in which such knives have been found, is that they were male status symbols, perhaps connected with the spheres of warfare and hunting, and unrelated to the later *peseshkef*.[117]

This example illustrates the difficulty involved in distinguishing implements of ritual character from more mundane objects. But even if we could distinguish between the two, any reconstruction of ritual activity based on artefacts found in graves would almost certainly be incomplete. Other rituals may have been performed at the burial place without leaving any trace there. Some may have been purely verbal, others may have involved the use of implements that were taken elsewhere after the rite was completed. Yet others may have been conducted away from the burial place altogether.[118] As Bourriau has noted, 'When considering burial customs we always have to accept that the tangible remains are not the whole story, even in those rare cases where the burial is found intact.'[119] If the earliest Egyptians did employ rituals to reanimate or restore the deceased to life, we cannot recover any specific details about them from the evidence that has been preserved.

1.8. TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE PREDYNASTIC EGYPTIANS BELIEVE THAT THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THIS WORLD WAS MIRRORED IN THE NEXT ONE?

1.8.1. Multiple interments and group burials as indicators of the survival of family ties in the afterlife?

Although single burials are the norm throughout the predynastic period, there are also numerous instances of burials in which more than one body was interred in the same grave. In some cases, adults and children were buried together. Multiple burials are

[115] See section 2.6.1.

[116] So B. Adams, 'Seeking the Roots of Ancient Egypt: A Unique Cemetery Reveals Monuments and Rituals from Before the Pharaohs', *Archéo-Nil* 12 (2002), pp. 27–8.

[117] See T. Hikade, 'Getting the Ritual Right—Fishtail Knives in Predynastic Egypt', in S. Meyer (ed.), *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World/Ägypten—Tempel der gesamten Welt* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), pp. 137–51.

[118] Stevenson, *The Predynastic Egyptian Cemetery of el-Gerzeh*, p. 186.

[119] J. Bourriau, 'Patterns of Change in Burial Customs during the Middle Kingdom', in S. Quirke (ed.), *Middle Kingdom Studies* (New Malden, 1991), p. 4.

already attested at the Palaeolithic site of Gebel Sahaba in the Sudan.[120] These are approximately 12,000 years old. They occur in small numbers in Badarian cemeteries and at Gebel Ramlah in the western desert in the fifth millennium BC.[121] Such burials are also found in cemeteries throughout the entire Naqada period, becoming more common in the later phases of it, and in Lower Nubian A Group cemeteries as well. Some think that those responsible for burials of this type were motivated by a belief that the family was important not just in this life but in the next one as well, and that by burying members of a family together they ensured their cohesion as a unit in the hereafter.[122] If so, this would suggest that the afterlife they envisaged had a social aspect, in which the dead hoped to be integrated with others.

But this theory is problematic in two respects. One is that we have no way of knowing whether those bodies discovered in multiple burials were members of the same family or not.[123] The other is that we have a considerable body of evidence for separate burial of children from predynastic Egypt, a phenomenon that is also well attested in other cultures.[124] At Merimda Beni Salama, for example, young children were buried (or their bodies disposed of) in the settlement area and adults interred elsewhere.[125] Likewise, at some Badarian Period sites, children were buried in settlements and adults in cemeteries located in the outlying desert.[126] At el-Omari, one cemetery was divided into zones, with burials of men concentrated in one part and those of women and children in the other.[127] The idea that multiple burials ensured family cohesion in the hereafter is difficult to reconcile with this sort of deliberate and systematic separation. We should also remember that in cemeteries where multiple burials do occur they normally constitute a minority of the total number of graves, so if the practice conferred a benefit or advantage, it is hard to see why it was not used more extensively at such sites.

In some predynastic cemeteries, clusters of burials have been observed.[128] A group of interments may be arranged in a circular pattern, for instance.[129] Some have hypothesized that this sort of arrangement marked the burials in question as those belonging to members of the same family or kinship group.[130] The scientific evidence for this

[120] See Geus in Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa*, p. 57; Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 64.

[121] Kobusiewicz, Kabaciński, Schild, Irish, and Wendorf in Friedman and Fiske (eds), *Egypt at its Origins* 3, pp. 195 and 208–9.

[122] M. Murray, 'Burial Customs and Beliefs in the Hereafter in Predynastic Egypt', *JEA* 42 (1956), p. 90; Linghu in Eyre (ed.), *Seventh International Congress*, pp. 683–4; Hendrickx, Huyge, and Wendrich in Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology*, p. 22.

[123] For the possibility that such burials might express some other kind of social relationship, see Stevenson, *JEA* 95 (2009), pp. 184–5.

[124] Ucko, *World Archaeology* 1 (1969), pp. 270–1.

[125] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 117; Dębowska-Ludwin, *Early Burial Customs in Northern Egypt*, pp. 23 and 60.

[126] Hendrickx and Vermeersch in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, p. 37.

[127] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 122.

[128] Stevenson, *JEA* 95 (2009), pp. 182–4.

[129] Ibid., p. 183.

[130] See e.g. K. Bard, *From Farmers to Pharaohs: Mortuary Evidence for the Rise of Complex Society in Egypt* (Sheffield, 1994), p. 69; W. Anderson, 'Badarian Burials: Evidence of Social Inequality in Middle Egypt during the Early Predynastic Era', *JARCE* 29 (1992), p. 62.

is doubtful, however. In most cases we have insufficient information to determine whether individuals buried in such grave clusters were actually related to one another or not.[131] Even if they were, this need not mean that they were interred in close proximity in order to promote the cohesion of the group in the afterlife. The practice may have been intended rather to impress the living, proclaiming the importance of the family involved to those who visited the cemetery.

1.8.2. Subsidiary burials as evidence for social stratification in the afterlife?

Another phenomenon that merits investigation is that of the subsidiary burial. A number of examples of subsidiary burials are attested from the period of our survey. In some instances, they surround the primary burial with which they are associated. In others, they are placed within it but in a clearly subordinate position to the main burial, thus distinguishing them from multiple burials in which no one body is accorded preferential treatment. The earliest known subsidiary burials are probably those excavated in the elite cemetery HK6 at Hierakonpolis, where Tomb 16 (*c.*3650 BC) was surrounded by the graves of both humans and animals.[132] Later examples come from el-Kadada in the Sudan (contemporary with Naqada II and the Lower Nubian A Group), where bodies of human adults, children, and dogs were discovered among the grave goods in some burials.[133] It is interesting to note, at both sites, the presence of both human beings and animals in subsidiary graves.[134]

A common interpretation of such burials is that at the death of an important personage people and animals were sacrificed so that they could accompany their master to the next world and perform service for him there.[135] If this was true of our subsidiary burials, then it would appear that those responsible for them envisaged a form of communal afterlife. The bond between master and subordinates, whether human or otherwise, was to be maintained in the hereafter. Against this it might be argued that in early dynastic Egypt ritual killing also took place in conjunction with other types of event.[136] Above all, it was a

[131] Cf. P. Podzorski, *Their Bones Shall Not Perish* (New Malden, 1990), p. 90.

[132] Friedman, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 19; Friedman in Teeter (ed.), *Before The Pyramids*, pp. 38–40; Friedman in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, pp. 85–8.

[133] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 227–8.

[134] According to W. van Neer, V. Linseele, and R. Friedman, 'Animal Burials and Food Offerings at the Elite Cemetery HK6 of Hierakonpolis', in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, p. 119, all animal burials at Hierakonpolis are subsidiary to human ones.

[135] See J.-P. Albert and B. Midant-Reynes, *Le sacrifice humain en Égypte ancienne et ailleurs* (Paris, 2005); J. van Dijk, 'Retainer Sacrifice in Egypt and in Nubia', in J. Bremmer (ed.), *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2007), pp. 134–55. *Archéo-Nil* 10 (2000) is devoted entirely to the topic of human sacrifice.

[136] Logan, *JARCE* 27 (1990), pp. 66–7. See also section 2.7.2.

display of power.[137] If this was true in predynastic Egypt as well, then the bodies in the subsidiary graves could be those of executed criminals.[138] But the fact that some subsidiary burials were themselves supplied with grave goods indicates a degree of concern for the posthumous fate of those interred in them, which suggests in turn that their deaths had a deeper purpose beyond that of vaunting the power or social status of the individual whose demise they accompanied.

If predynastic Egyptians did believe that the earthly bond between a powerful person and those subordinate to him persisted in the next world, then evidently species was no bar to continued participation in a relationship of this sort, since subsidiary burials could include animals as well as human beings. But were groups like this integrated into a larger social unit or units? If two powerful individuals were buried in the same cemetery, each surrounded by his own group of retainers, whether human or animal, was any form of posthumous interaction envisaged between them? Were they even thought of as co-existing in the same sphere? These are questions we cannot answer.

1.8.3. Different levels of expenditure on burial as an indicator of different expectations for the afterlife?

Egyptian cemeteries of the predynastic period provide ample evidence of varying levels of expenditure on burials, and varying degrees of access to the resources used in equipping them, especially those of its final phase, Naqada III. Above all, at sites like cemeteries U[139] and B[140] at Abydos, cemetery HK6 at Hierakonpolis,[141] and Tell el-Farkha in the eastern delta,[142] the distinction between the largest, most elaborate tombs on the one hand, and ordinary, less imposing burials on the other, became even more marked. The former might incorporate mud brick walls or a roof of wooden beams in their construction, or possess more than one chamber like the earlier Tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis. They might also occupy a special zone or area within a cemetery. Their owners rested in coffins of wood or clay.[143] The difference was further accentuated

[137] For the suggestion that the subsidiary burials of large animals like elephants and wild bulls at Hierakonpolis were meant to reflect the tomb owner's power and status, see Friedman in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, pp. 39–40; Friedman in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, pp. 87–8.

[138] S. Dougherty, 'Death in Fragments: Piecing Together the Skeletons', *Nekhen News* 22 (2010), pp. 6–7, draws attention to the fact that some of the skeletal remains in subsidiary burials from Hierakonpolis had been exposed to fire, suggesting that the individuals in question may have been burned to death as punishment for wrongdoing.

[139] U. Hartung, 'Hippopotamus Hunters and Bureaucrats: Elite Burials at Cemetery U at Abydos', in Raffaele, Nuzzolo, and Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology*, pp. 107–20; Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 8–15.

[140] Ibid., pp. 15–22.

[141] Friedman, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 23–6.

[142] K. Ciałowicz, 'The Predynastic/Early Dynastic Period at Tell el-Farkha', in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, pp. 62–3.

[143] Hartung in Raffaele, Nuzzolo, and Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology*, p. 108.

by variation in the number and nature of grave goods. Not only were grave goods more profuse in wealthier burials, they included items made of exotic materials, some only obtainable by import or trade, like gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and obsidian as well.[144] This is usually interpreted as evidence of increased hierarchy and social stratification, the rise of a small group of elite individuals.[145]

But there is nothing to suggest that those with more elaborate burials had fundamentally different expectations of the hereafter to those interred in humbler fashion. Although a more elaborate burial may imply higher status in this life, different modes of burial need not imply different afterlife beliefs. As Goody has noted, most societies practice more than one form of burial, and the form used in a given instance will often be correlated with the status of the deceased.[146]

1.9. DID PREDYNASTIC EGYPTIANS ENVISAGE ANY FORM OF INTERACTION BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD?

1.9.1. Evidence for offering cults in early predynastic Egypt?

According to one view, in the Badarian and Naqada I Periods, the act of burial was regarded as conclusive, after which nothing more needed to be done for the dead. Thus the living had no further involvement with them.[147] But some think that the living continued to supply food and drink in the form of offerings and care for the deceased in other ways even during these early periods. At Nabta Playa, about 30 km southeast of Gebel Ramlah, and 100 km west of Abu Simbel, rock scatters resembling stone circles were discovered, not all of which are still *in situ*, which some think may have served as shrines, memorials, or cenotaphs for the dead.[148] Proposed dates for these range as early as 5000 BC, but both their date and significance are disputed. Others think they may have served as calendars, sundials, or even astronomical observatories, and thus had nothing to do with the dead, or else that their function has yet to be determined.[149]

[144] Ibid., pp. 108–9.

[145] Not everyone accepts this view. See e.g. Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 72–3, who says that a more nuanced interpretation is needed and that other factors have to be taken into account. The problems involved in using the wealth of burials as a measure of status and social hierarchy have been emphasized in Stevenson, *JEA* 95 (2009), pp. 178–82.

[146] J. Goody, 'Death and Social Control Among the LoDagaa', *Man* 59 (1959), pp. 134–8, cited in Ucko, *World Archaeology* 1 (1969), p. 270.

[147] Bergamini in Donadoni Roveri (ed.), *Egyptian Civilization*, p. 31.

[148] Friedman in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, pp. 56–7; Bárta, *Swimmers in the Sand*, pp. 83 and 87.

[149] See Friedman in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, pp. 56–7; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 57; D. Wengrow, 'On Desert Origins for the Ancient Egyptians', *Antiquity* 77 (2003), pp. 597–9; S. Hendrickx apud T. Wilkinson, K. Butzer, D. Huyge, S. Hendrickx, T. Kendall, and I. Shaw,

The excavators of the elite cemetery HK6 at Hierakonpolis have conjectured that structures preserving the remains of wooden columns discovered in the centre of that site may have been venues for ritual activity and prototypes of later funerary temples.[150] They have also proposed that an above-ground structure discovered near Tomb 23 not far away in the same cemetery could have been a sort of offering chapel for the owner of that tomb. Fragments of a life-size stone statue were found inside it, which they have suggested could have been the focus of an offering cult.[151] If all this is correct, then there is evidence for regular and continuing interaction between the living and the dead as early as the first half of the fourth millennium BC. But caution is in order here, since the interpretation of the structures found at Hierakonpolis as venues for the regular performance of funerary rituals is far from certain. Subsequent work at cemetery HK6 has cast doubt upon the association between Tomb 23 and the adjacent structure in which the statue was found, since the former now appears to post-date the latter.[152]

1.9.2. The late predynastic cemetery at Tarkhan

Wengrow has distinguished two cultural and emotional constructions of death. In one, the dead person was removed permanently from this world. In the other, certain aspects of the deceased remained integrated with it. The dead persisted in this world as recipients of offerings and other services provided by the living. According to him, the first construction prevailed in predynastic Egypt, the second in the dynastic period.[153] This view is broadly supported by the results of our survey, since only at the very end of the predynastic period do we have unequivocal evidence for a cult of the dead in which the living continued to exercise care for them after the day of burial itself.

Perhaps the best illustration of this comes from the site of Tarkhan, 60 km south of Cairo on the west side of the Nile River.[154] Snape has provided a detailed description of

'Review Feature: A Review of *Genesis of the Pharaohs: Dramatic New Discoveries that Rewrite the Origins of Ancient Egypt*, by Toby Wilkinson', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 14 (2004), p. 123.

[150] Friedman in Raffaele, Nuzzolo, and Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology*, pp. 69–74; Friedman in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, pp. 41–3; Friedman in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 60; Friedman, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 13–19; Friedman in Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art*, p. 85.

[151] Friedman in Raffaele, Nuzzolo, and Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology*, pp. 68–9; Friedman, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 17–18; Friedman in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 60.

[152] R. Friedman, W. van Neer, and V. Linseele, 'The Elite Cemetery at Hierakonpolis: 2009–2010 Update', in Friedman and Fiske (eds), *Egypt at its Origins* 3, pp. 187–8.

[153] Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 223–4 and 266–7.

[154] For the early history of this site, see L. Mawdsley, 'The Foundation and Development of Tarkhan during the Naqada IIIA2 Period', in L. Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2012), pp. 331–47.

one particular grave from this site, Tarkhan 1845.[155] This grave was discovered intact by W.M.F. Petrie in 1912–13. It dates to the end of the Naqada III Period. The burial consisted of a skeleton lying in contracted position on its left side, head to the south facing west. An alabaster bowl with a slate palette was positioned in front of its face, and five other vessels of varying sizes had been placed in the shallow oval grave along with it. The perimeter of the burial pit was marked by a rectangular enclosure of mud brick approximately 1 m high which, if filled in, would have served as a superstructure marking the location of the grave.

Attached to the outside of the southern end of the west wall of this enclosure was a small room or annex just large enough for a person to enter. This room and the area in front of its entrance were filled with storage jars and food containers, evidently offerings for the dead. The body had been positioned within the grave so that it faced toward the wall shared by the enclosure and the small chamber attached to it. There were two slits in that wall to enable the dead person to see and have access to the things deposited in the chamber.[156] Other tombs at Tarkhan of this date display the same architectural features, although the annex sometimes abuts the east wall of the tomb rather than the west. In such cases, the dead person was positioned facing east, making it clear that the factor determining the orientation of the body was the need for the deceased to face the offering annex or chamber, whichever wall of the tomb this happened to abut.[157] Since the offerings must have been deposited after the interment, when the grave itself had been filled in but the annex was still accessible, this is clear evidence of post-burial concern for the occupant on the part of the living.

1.10. DID PREDYNASTIC EGYPTIAN IDEAS ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE VARY FROM ONE LOCALITY TO ANOTHER OR WERE THEY MORE OR LESS THE SAME THROUGHOUT THE LAND?

Burial customs differed considerably from one part of Egypt to another during the earlier phases of the predynastic period. In the fifth millennium BC, for example, grave goods are found with much greater frequency and in greater numbers at Badarian sites in southern and middle Egypt than they are at Merimda Beni Salama and el-Omari in

[155] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 8–13. Cf. Mawdsley in Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'*, pp. 339–40. Original publication: W.M.F. Petrie, *Tarkhan* 2 (London, 1914), pp. 2–3 and plate 12.

[156] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 12–13, compares these with similar slits connecting the rooms of Tomb U-j and other tombs at Abydos.

[157] See Petrie, *Tarkhan* 2, p. 3 and plates 13–14; W. Grajetzki, 'The Architecture and the Signification of the Tarkhan Mastabas', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 104–5; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 29–30. According to M. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids* (London, 1997), p. 18, contemporary A Group tombs in Nubia have such annexes as well.

the north.[158] During the first half of the fourth millennium, burial customs at northern sites continued to display distinctive features. At Maadi, a southern suburb of Cairo, for instance, burials were much less elaborate than those further south.[159] The cemetery was separate from the settlement; only still-born babies were buried within the zone of habitation. The dead were placed in oval pits in contracted position wrapped in a mat or cloth. In earlier graves the head was to the south, but not facing in any particular direction; in later ones it was to the south facing east, rather than west as in Upper Egypt. Grave goods were sparse, restricted to a vessel or two. In the earliest part of the cemetery, dogs, goats, and sheep were buried alongside humans.

But in the second half of the fourth millennium, starting in Naqada IIC–D, Upper Egyptian burial customs began spreading northward, gradually replacing the indigenous ones. At some sites, for example, Maadi, occupation simply ceased. At others, local wares were supplanted by forms of Upper Egyptian origin. By the end of the Naqada II period, the indigenous material culture of Lower Egypt had been replaced entirely by that of Upper Egypt. Even at a site like Minshat Abu Omar in the northeastern delta, the burial customs now followed the same pattern as those in the southern part of the country.[160]

Naqada culture spread not only northwards, but southwards into Nubia as well. Graves of the Lower Nubian A Group culture, the first phase of which overlaps with Naqada I and II, show considerable influence from Egyptian burial traditions.[161] The dead were placed in pits on their left sides in contracted position with the head to the south facing west. Bodies were painted with ochre and wrapped in mats. Grave goods included pottery vessels, cosmetic palettes of quartzite or limestone, beads and pendants made of bone, ivory, faience, and other materials, and garments decorated with ostrich feathers. Multiple burials, however, were more common in Nubia than in Egypt.

[158] The most detailed publication of Merimda is J. Eiwanger, *Merimde-Benisalâme* 1–3 (Mainz am Rhein, 1984–1992), supplemented by F. Badawi, J. Kuckertz, F. Rösing, D. Bergander, and S. Klug, *Merimde-Benisalâme* 4 (Wiesbaden, 2014). For briefer descriptions, see J. Eiwanger in Bard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 501–5; Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 108–18; Hendrickx and Vermeersch in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 34–6; Dębowska-Ludwin, *Early Burial Customs in Northern Egypt*, p. 23. On el-Omari, see F. Debono and B. Mortensen, *El Omari: A Neolithic Settlement and Other Sites in the Vicinity of Wadi Hof, Helwan* (Mainz am Rhein, 1990). For briefer discussions, see B. Mortensen, 'el-Omari', in Bard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 593–4; Hendrickx and Vermeersch in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, p. 36; Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 118–24; Dębowska-Ludwin, *Early Burial Customs in Northern Egypt*, pp. 23–4.

[159] I. Rizkana and J. Seeher, *Maadi* I–IV (Mainz am Rhein, 1987–90). For brief overviews of the burial customs, see Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 215–16; B. Midant-Reynes, 'The Naqada Period', in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 55–6.

[160] For this site, see K. Kroeper, 'Minshat Abu Omar', in Bard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 529–31, with references to earlier literature. Spencer, *Early Egypt*, p. 49, gives a list of delta sites which attest to the spread of Naqada material culture throughout the entire country at this time.

[161] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, pp. 221–2.

In terms of burial customs, therefore, there was greater diversity in the earlier part of the predynastic period than there was later on. But custom is not the same as belief, so whether these differences in burial provision reflect different conceptions of the hereafter is impossible to say. In particular, the relative scarcity of grave goods at northern sites like Merimda Beni Salama should not be interpreted as evidence that their inhabitants paid little attention to the afterlife or were unconcerned for the dead. As Stevenson has noted, social management of death may have been conducted away from the place of burial at sites like this one, or in a manner that left no tangible trace there.[162]

1.11. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of a concise description of death and burial practices in predynastic Egypt, Snape concludes that despite all the material evidence at our disposal we still have no real idea of how graves were regarded by the living during the predynastic period or what the Egyptians of that time actually thought would happen to them after they died.[163] Here we have examined the evidence in somewhat greater detail, but in my view, the results confirm that his assessment is broadly correct. It is very difficult to provide definite answers for any of the questions that we have posed. For some questions, e.g. was the next world imagined to be inhabited by supernatural beings with whom the dead would interact, we simply have no evidence that will stand up to close scrutiny. For others, e.g. in what form did the earliest Egyptians imagine they would pass their posthumous existence, the evidence is equivocal, and capable of being interpreted in more than one way.

Does this mean that it is impossible to infer religious belief, or more specifically, belief about the hereafter, from artefacts in the absence of written sources? In fact, making such inferences is easy. What is difficult is to prove that a particular inference is correct. The problematic aspect of this approach has been noted by Kyriakidis, who comments 'Archaeology is largely the study of material remains and of material culture in general and does not have any direct access to beliefs.'[164] Similarly, Geus says with regard to burial provision, 'The archaeologist unfortunately recovers material remains

[162] See Stevenson, *The Predynastic Egyptian Cemetery of el-Gerzeh*, pp. 156 and 207; Stevenson, *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 22.1 (2007), p. 86; Stevenson in Wendrich and Dieleman (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2m3463b2, p. 6. Chapman and Randsborg in Chapman, Kinnes, and Randsborg (eds), *The Archaeology of Death*, pp. 8 and 12–13, and Ucko, *World Archaeology* 1 (1969), pp. 266–7, note that in other societies offerings to the deceased are not always placed within the grave.

[163] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 8.

[164] E. Kyriakidis, 'Archaeologies of Ritual', in Kyriakidis (ed.), *The Archaeology of Ritual*, p. 298.

of this action only, by-passing its deeper meaning, its underlying beliefs and the associated religious or magical rites.'[165]

The opposite view is expressed by Budka, who maintains that the religious dimension, including beliefs about the afterlife, can be recovered from grave goods.[166] Likewise, Wengrow claims, purely on the basis of similarity in burial customs, that 'funerary rites took on a strikingly similar form during the fifth millennium, suggesting a coherent body of beliefs and practices, widely disseminated from central Egypt to the region of modern Khartoum'.[167] That practices throughout this area were similar can be verified empirically, but how can we be so sure about rites and the beliefs underlying them? Custom is not the same as belief.[168] Nor do similar rites necessarily imply similar beliefs.[169]

As these divergent opinions indicate, there is scope for debate on this question. It appears to me, however, that the results of our survey support the views expressed by Kyriakidis and Geus. As we have seen, apart from a few very basic concepts (e.g. the dead require sustenance in the next world; protecting the body, for whatever reason, is important), artefacts alone cannot really inform us in any meaningful way about the predynastic Egyptians' ideas concerning the hereafter. In the absence of written sources, we can only speculate.

In the study of predynastic Egyptian religion, such speculation invariably involves projecting beliefs documented in texts from later periods of Egyptian history back in time, so this brings us neatly to another question. Is it legitimate to project later ideas back into earlier periods from which there is no textual evidence? Some have expressed doubts. Midant-Reynes, for instance, notes 'We occasionally find elements of the Predynastic cognitive scheme that have survived into the pharaonic world, but to attempt to extrapolate back from the Dynastic period into prehistory is somewhat dangerous, since concepts become crammed with new cultural nuances over the course of time, acquiring different appearances, and new myths are grafted onto old rites until almost all sense of their original identity has been erased.'[170] Others, however, like Wilkinson and Huyge, view extrapolating backwards in this way as a legitimate procedure.[171] But the fact that the two of them arrive at such divergent results by employing this methodology does not inspire much confidence in it.[172] Here too, the

[165] Geus in Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa*, p. 58.

[166] J. Budka, 'Fundmaterial aus Gräbern: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der archäologischen Interpretation und ihre didaktische Vermittlung', in A. Verbovsek, B. Backes, and C. Jones (eds), *Methodik und Didaktik in der Ägyptologie* (Munich, 2011), p. 192.

[167] Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 27.

[168] Cf. Ucko, *World Archaeology* 1 (1969), p. 266.

[169] For disjunction between the two, see Kyriakidis in Kyriakidis (ed.), *The Archaeology of Ritual*, pp. 15–16.

[170] Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt*, p. 179.

[171] See e.g. Wilkinson apud Wilkinson, Butzer, Huyge, Hendrickx, Kendall, and Shaw, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 14 (2004), pp. 116–17; Huyge, ibid., p. 121; D. Huyge, 'Cosmology, Ideology and Personal Religious Practice in Ancient Egyptian Rock Art', in Friedman (ed.), *Egypt and Nubia*, pp. 193–6.

[172] See Huyge's critique of Wilkinson's interpretations of the religious symbolism of Egyptian rock art apud Wilkinson, Butzer, Huyge, Hendrickx, Kendall, and Shaw, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 14 (2004), pp. 121–2.

problem is not identifying possible antecedents for features of later Egyptian religion, but rather determining which, if any, of these are genuine antecedents and proving it.

The view adopted here is that projecting Pharaonic religious concepts back into the predynastic period in the manner advocated by Wilkinson and Huyge is only justified if (a) some sort of continuity can be demonstrated between a concept and its hypothetical antecedent, or (b) the context in which the presumed antecedent appears is sufficiently rich to leave no doubt of the connection between the two. To illustrate with a couple of examples, by the first criterion, one cannot identify the boats so frequently represented in predynastic rock art as depictions of the bark of the sun god, as some have done,[173] since in Pharaonic Egypt there is no firm evidence for belief in that deity until the third dynasty, long after the end of the predynastic period.[174] By the second criterion, the occurrence in some predynastic graves of bifurcated or fishtail knives resembling the *peseshkef*, an implement later used in the Opening of the Mouth Ritual, is by itself insufficient evidence to prove that a precursor of the rite in question was already being performed at that time. A deposit containing such a knife along with specimens of the other distinctive implements used in the Opening of the Mouth Ritual, on the other hand, would provide more convincing proof of this, by virtue of the richer context in which the knife appeared.[175]

One final point arising from our survey is worthy of note. Innovations in funerary belief and practice in later periods of Egyptian history are usually assumed to originate in royal or elite circles, from which they gradually percolate down to lower levels of society.[176] The evidence of our survey gives a rather different impression. At Hierakonpolis, for example, the earliest examples of attempts to treat or preserve the human body are attested in the non-elite cemetery HK43 rather than the elite cemetery HK6.[177] Likewise, slits connecting the burial chamber and an adjoining above-ground offering chapel, allowing the dead to move from one space to the other and gain access to the offerings, occur initially in relatively modest tombs at Tarkhan.[178] Thus, new developments need not always originate among the higher echelons of society or make their first appearance in the most elaborate tombs. It will be helpful to bear this in mind as we turn our attention to subsequent periods of Egyptian history.

[173] See e.g. Huyge in Friedman (ed.), *Egypt and Nubia*, pp. 200–1; Huyge apud Wilkinson, Butzer, Huyge, Hendrickx, Kendall, and Shaw, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 14 (2004), p. 121.

[174] See section 1.4.3.

[175] See section 1.7.4. Sets of objects used in the Opening of the Mouth Ritual, including the *peseshkef*, are actually attested from later periods of Egyptian history. See W. Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt: Life in Death for Rich and Poor* (London, 2003), p. 28; R. Van Walsem, 'The *PSŠ-KF*: An Investigation of an Ancient Egyptian Funerary Instrument', *OMRO* 59 (1978–9), pp. 224–5.

[176] See sections 2.10.2 and 4.2.1. [177] See section 1.2.1. [178] See section 1.9.2.

2

Prelude to Osiris II: Conceptions of the Afterlife in the Early Dynastic Period and the First Half of the Old Kingdom

Two features distinguish the period surveyed in this chapter from those surveyed previously. First, it is a time in which Egypt was a unified state ruled by kings. This gives us the opportunity to compare the treatment given to them at death with that given to their subjects, to see whether these reveal any differences between royal and non-royal expectations of the afterlife. Second, we now have written sources at our disposal. Initially these tend to be brief, often no more than names and titles, but nevertheless they do provide us with crucial information of a kind that is lacking for prehistoric and predynastic Egypt.

In Chapter 1 an attempt was made to answer ten questions concerning the earliest Egyptians' ideas about the afterlife. Below we will try to answer nine of the same questions, some in slightly adapted form, this time for the early dynastic period and the first half of the Old Kingdom, here defined as the third, fourth, and fifth dynasties up to the reign of Reneferef (*c.*2448–2445 BC). As we will see, it is during this king's brief tenure of the throne that Osiris makes his initial appearance in the historical record. Only the first question posed in Chapter 1, what is the earliest evidence for belief in an afterlife in ancient Egypt, will not be taken up again here. Although we are not in a position to say precisely when belief in the hereafter first arose in the Nile Valley, it is clear that it was well established by the time that the Egyptian state came into being. Instead an entirely new tenth question will be asked, were there any differences between royal and non-royal expectations of the afterlife during the period under survey?

2.1. IN WHAT FORM DID THE EGYPTIANS OF THE EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE OLD KINGDOM IMAGINE THEY WOULD PASS THEIR POSTHUMOUS EXISTENCE?

2.1.1. Wrapping and other treatments of the body: belief in posthumous survival in corporeal form?

As we saw in section 1.2.1, the earliest attempts to preserve the corpse by wrapping, application of resinous substances, and other means date back to the fifth millennium BC, and such practices are attested sporadically thereafter during the remainder of the predynastic period. They continue into the period we are considering now. A linen-wrapped arm wearing bracelets was discovered in the tomb of the first dynasty ruler Djer in the royal cemetery of Umm el-Qaab at Abydos, which is presumed to be that of the original occupant. The linen had been impregnated with resin.[1] Eighty-five additional fragments of resin-soaked linen discovered in the spoil heaps of the Petrie excavations at Umm el-Qaab are thought to have come from this tomb or those of Djet and Den. They include wads and rolls that may have been used to pad the corpse to preserve its shape.[2] Some of the bodies buried in the subsidiary graves surrounding the tomb of Djer were wrapped in layers of resin-soaked linen.[3] At Tarkhan and Saqqara, a few bodies were wrapped in linen and treated with resin and perhaps natron as well. Those from the former site date to the first dynasty, those from the latter to the second.[4] The body of one woman from Saqqara was discovered lying in a flexed or contracted position, with each limb wrapped separately in layers of linen bandages.[5]

A number of mummies and parts of mummies have been preserved from the first half of the Old Kingdom.[6] These include remains of both royalty and non-royalty. In the more elaborate specimens, the embalmers expended much effort in creating an idealized figure of the deceased. Pads of linen were used to fill out the shape. Linen

[1] J. Jones, 'New Perspectives on the Development of Mummification and Funerary Practices during the Pre- and Early Dynastic Periods', in J.-C. Goyon and C. Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2007), pp. 985–7.

[2] Ibid., pp. 987–8.

[3] D. Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt: Social Transformations in North-East Africa, 10,000 to 2650 BC* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 252.

[4] Jones in Goyon and Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1, p. 986; E. Köhler, 'Ursprung einer langen Tradition: Grab und Totenkult in der Frühzeit', in H. Guksch, E. Hofmann, and M. Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten* (Munich, 2003), p. 15.

[5] S. Ikram and A. Dodson, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1998), p. 109.

[6] For mummification in the Old Kingdom, see Ikram and Dodson, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 109–13, 155–6, and 167; J. Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2001), pp. 47–8, 65–7, and 79–81; M. Bárta, *Journey to the West: The World of the Old Kingdom Tombs in Ancient Egypt* (Prague, 2011), pp. 136 and 245–7; C. Theis, *Deine Seele zum Himmel, dein Leichnam zur Erde* (Hamburg, 2011), pp. 24–8.

soaked with resin or, in some cases, plaster was used to mold the facial features. Individual limbs were wrapped separately, and fingers, toes, and even hair were carefully delineated. In mummies of the fourth dynasty and later, the viscera were removed through an incision made in the left side and preserved separately, either in chests, pits, or niches in the wall of the burial chamber.[7] The brain was normally left in situ, although instances in which it was extracted are not unknown.[8]

Physical remains do not provide the only evidence for mummification during the period under survey. There is also a substantial amount of textual evidence from the first dynasty onward, including titles that identify their holders as embalmers or other participants in the process of mummification. Those like *wty 'Inpw*, 'embalmer of Anubis', show that the god Anubis was already regarded as the patron of this sort of activity.[9]

Attempts to preserve the body or give it a lifelike appearance like those described above give rise to the same question we had to confront in reviewing the predynastic evidence for such practices. Were they motivated by a belief that the dead would continue their existence in corporeal form and therefore bodily integrity was essential to survival in the hereafter? Any attempt to answer this question has to reckon with the fact that only a minority of those who died were mummified during the period under survey. Most bodies were simply wrapped in cloth. If corporeal integrity was a prerequisite for posthumous survival, then why was mummification not more widespread? The more elaborate forms of treating the corpse would undoubtedly have been expensive, and thus affordable by relatively few. But there were less elaborate modes of embalmment as well, and we should remember that the earliest evidence for attempts to preserve the human body comes from fairly ordinary burials rather than high-status ones,[10] so it is difficult to explain them as the prerogative of a specific class or group.

Willems has questioned the widely held view that mummification was deemed to be essential for posthumous survival at this time. As he notes, even during the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom the practice was still quite circumscribed, despite the fact that texts of those periods make frequent reference to the embalming rites. He cites the example of a woman called Hetep, whose coffin was inscribed with texts relating to the rites in question but whose body had not actually been mummified, only wrapped in cloth. Yet it is hardly credible that she had no expectation of survival in the hereafter, and in fact the texts on her coffin implicitly assume this.[11] Perhaps

[7] This is disputed by T. Rzeuska, 'And Where Are the Viscera…?', in N. Strudwick and H. Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 244–55, who says there is no evidence that the receptacles in question ever contained viscera. She thinks the pits and niches were caches for materials that had been soiled by contact with the body during its preparation for burial.

[8] Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 139–40.

[9] See e.g. T. DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1: From the Archaic Period to Dynasty X* (London, 2005), pp. 34–5, 48, 209, 214–20, and 248–51.

[10] See section 1.2.1.

[11] H. Willems, *Les textes des sarcophages et la démocratie: Éléments d'une histoire culturelle du Moyen Empire égyptien* (Paris, 2008), pp. 149–50; H. Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture: Religious Ideas and Ritual Practice in Middle Kingdom Elite Cemeteries* (Leiden and

wrapping in cloth, in conjunction with any rites that were performed, was deemed sufficient to ensure her continued existence.[12]

The same could have been true in the period under survey. Where deliberate attempts were made to preserve the body, perhaps preservation was valued for its own sake rather than for any benefit the deceased might derive from it. Aesthetic considerations may have played a part as well, a desire to improve or enhance the appearance of the dead for those who were present at the burial. In any event, mummification was evidently not deemed to be essential at the time that concerns us. Nor was it the only option available for treating the corpse. The predynastic practice of dismembering the body survives into the early dynastic period and Old Kingdom as well. Examples of it are known from Giza, Meidum, Deshasha, and other sites. The practice does not actually die out until the sixth dynasty.[13] Its continuation, on however small a scale, is further evidence that bodily integrity was not yet inextricably linked with posthumous survival.

2.1.2. Posthumous survival as an *akh* or transfigured spirit

Were there other forms or aspects that the deceased were supposed to assume in the afterlife during the period under survey? On a number of early dynastic cylinder seals there occurs a sign that some identify as a representation of a bird with its head turned backwards. The oldest examples date to the first dynasty. This sign is sometimes found in conjunction with another sign depicting a figure seated at an offering table, although each can occur without the other.[14] Some interpret the former sign as an early form of Gardiner Sign-List G25 which has the phonetic value *ꜣḫ*, and thus as a writing of the noun *ꜣḫ*, 'glorified, transfigured spirit', an epithet which is taken to refer to the figure seated at the offering table.[15] If this interpretation is correct, then the seals in question provide early evidence for belief that the deceased would survive in this form.

Boston, 2014), pp. 139–41. For Hetep's burial, see R. Engelbach, *Riqqeh and Memphis* 6 (London, 1915), pp. 5 and 28 with plate 26.

[12] According to later sources, the mummy bandages imparted divinity and thus immortality. See M. Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing* (Oxford, 1983), p. 40.

[13] Taylor, *Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, p. 48; Theis, *Deine Seele zum Himmel, dein Leichnam zur Erde*, pp. 26–7.

[14] See I. Regulski, 'Egypt's Early Dynastic Cylinder Seals Reconsidered', *BiOr* 68 (2011), pp. 20–2. The two signs occur together on seals of her types 5 and 7. The supposed bird is found without the figure seated at the table on seals of her type 4, and the seated figure without the bird on seals of her type 6.

[15] See, for example, R. Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods: The Evolution of Divine Classifiers in the Old Kingdom* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 82 and 124–5; F. Friedman, 'On the Meaning of Some Anthropoid Busts from Deir el-Medina', *JEA* 71 (1985), p. 86; T.G.H. James, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Inscriptions in the Brooklyn Museum* 1 (Brooklyn, 1974), p. 2; P. Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1963), pp. 37–40. This interpretation goes back to W.M.F. Petrie, 'The Earliest Inscriptions', *Ancient Egypt* 1914, part 2, pp. 64–5.

There are some problems with this interpretation, however. First, it is by no means clear that all examples of the sign on the seals actually represent a bird. As James has noted, some look more like an antelope.[16] Moreover, the head of the supposed bird on the seals is reversed, whereas that of Gardiner Sign-List G25 is not, so it is difficult to equate the two. Finally, Gardiner Sign-List G25 represents the northern bald ibis, *Geronticus eremita*.[17] This bird has a long curved beak, whereas the bird on the seals has a short one resembling that of the secretary bird, and lacks the other characteristic features of the bald ibis.[18] Thus one should be cautious about accepting the seals as evidence for the existence of the concept of the *akh* or glorified spirit.[19]

A title *sḫn ꜣḫ* appears for the first time in texts of the reign of the first dynasty ruler Djer.[20] This is often translated 'spirit seeker' or similar, and is assumed to designate a priest who looks after or performs cultic activity for a deceased person.[21] However, it is not absolutely certain that the second element in this title actually means 'glorified spirit'. A variant form *sḫn ꜣḫ nswt* is attested in the second dynasty. This might conceivably mean that the holder of the title acted on behalf of a deceased king.[22] But the *sḫn ꜣḫ* can participate in rites for the living king as well.[23] According to later evidence, deities could also have a *sḫn ꜣḫ*, which casts doubt both on the commonly accepted translation 'spirit seeker' and the assumption that holders of this title were invariably or exclusively mortuary priests.[24]

The earliest unequivocal examples of the noun *ꜣḫ*, 'glorified spirit', occur in scenes in tombs of the fourth and fifth dynasties at Giza that depict the presentation of offerings to the tomb owner or his statue with the caption *snm.t ꜣḫ*, 'feeding the *akh*'.[25] However, the related verb *sꜣḫ*, 'glorify', is already attested in the early fourth dynasty tomb of

[16] James, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Inscriptions in the Brooklyn Museum* 1, p. 2.

[17] See J. Janák, 'Spotting the Akh: The Presence of the Northern Bald Ibis in Ancient Egypt and its Early Decline', *JARCE* 46 (2010), pp. 17–31; J. Janák, 'Northern Bald Ibis (Akh-Bird)', in W. Wendrich and J. Dieleman (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2013), https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9m96g9sb, pp. 1–9.

[18] Janák, *JARCE* 46 (2010), pp. 22–3.

[19] Cf. J. Janák, 'Akh', in W. Wendrich and J. Dieleman (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2013), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7255p86v, p. 3.

[20] G. Martin, *Umm el-Qaab 7: Private Stelae of the Early Dynastic Period from the Royal Cemetery at Abydos* (Wiesbaden, 2011), p. 3.

[21] R. Hannig, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch 1: Altes Reich und Erste Zwischenzeit* (Mainz am Rhein, 2003), p. 1209; Martin, *Umm el-Qaab 7*, pp. 3 and 215 s.v. *sḫn-ꜣḫ*; T. Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 146 and 273; J. Kahl, '*nsw* und *bỉt*: Die Anfänge', in E.-M. Engel, V. Müller, and U. Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand: Streiflichter aus Ägyptens Geschichte zu Ehren von Günter Dreyer* (Wiesbaden, 2008), pp. 321–2; Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 1, pp. 368–70.

[22] Kahl in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, pp. 321–2.

[23] K. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen* (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 97, 193, 254, and 256–7.

[24] See R. El-Sayed, 'Quelques reflexions au sujet du titre *sḫnw ꜣḫ*', *BIFAO* 88 (1988), pp. 63–9.

[25] Hannig, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch 1*, p. 1158; Janák in Wendrich and Dielemann (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7255p86v, p. 3; Friedman, *JEA* 71 (1985), pp. 86–90; H. Junker, *Gîza* 2 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1934), pp. 62–6; J. Wilson, 'Funeral Services of the Egyptian Old Kingdom', *JNES* 3 (1944), p. 214.

Metjen at Saqqara (reign of Snefru), where priests are shown 'glorifying' the tomb owner, i.e. transforming him into a glorified spirit, and performing other rites for his benefit like the Ritual of Opening the Mouth.[26] Offering formulae in some fourth dynasty tombs request *ꜣḫ*, the state or condition of being a glorified spirit, for the tomb owner, along with other attributes like being noble and equipped.[27] All this shows clearly that the conception was well established by that date, even if unambiguous evidence for it before then is lacking.

2.1.3. Posthumous survival as a *ka*

As we saw in section 1.2.3, the *ka* was another aspect in which the deceased were supposed to survive. This connected them with the other members of their family, both ancestors and descendants. It was to the *ka* in particular that the offerings in the mortuary cult were directed. As early as the first dynasty, personal names incorporating the noun *ka* begin to appear in the written record.[28] Individuals with names of this type include owners of important mastaba tombs of the first dynasty at Saqqara like Hemaka (S3505)[29] and Ankhka (S3036),[30] both of whom lived in the reign of Den. Even one of the proto-kings of Dynasty 0 had a name that could be read as Ka or Sekhen.[31] References to *ḥm.w kꜣ*, '*ka* servants', priests whose duty it was to perform the cult of the deceased, occur as early as the reign of Qaa, last ruler of the first dynasty.[32] The *ḥw.t kꜣ*, 'mansion of the *ka*', a designation for the tomb or a chapel where that cult was carried out, is attested as early as the reign of Anedjib, the fifth king of that dynasty.[33] Thus the concept of the *ka* as an aspect or attribute of the deceased was firmly in existence by the beginning of the period under survey.

[26] R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* 2 (Berlin, 1849–56), plate 4. Cf. Wilson, *JNES* 3 (1944), p. 214.

[27] W. Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel* (Glückstadt, 1968), pp. 10 and 234.

[28] See examples in the list of names compiled in Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 1, pp. 379–672.

[29] W. Emery, *The Tomb of Hemaka* (Cairo, 1938); S. Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs: The Culture of Life and Death* (Chichester, 2011), p. 15; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 60–1 and 74–5.

[30] W. Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* 1 (Cairo, 1949), pp. 71–81. Cf. Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 17; M. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids* (London, 1997), p. 80.

[31] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 57–8; L. Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos: Two Funerary Enclosures from the Reign of Aha* (Wiesbaden, 2009), pp. 18 and 21.

[32] J. Kahl, *Frühägyptisches Wörterbuch* 3 (Wiesbaden, 2004), p. 306; P. Kaplony, 'Ka-Diener', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 3 (Wiesbaden, 1980), pp. 282–4.

[33] Kahl, *Frühägyptisches Wörterbuch* 3, p. 302; P. Kaplony, 'Ka-Haus', in Helck and Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 3, pp. 284–7; H. Papazian, 'Perspectives on the Cult of Pharaoh during the Third Millennium B.C.: A Chronological Overview', in H. Vymazalová and M. Bárta (eds), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt (The Third Millennium B.C.)* (Prague, 2008), pp. 65–6.

2.1.4. Belief in posthumous survival as a *ba*?

A third form of the deceased well attested in later periods of Egyptian history is the *ba*. This is the aspect in which the deceased were manifested in the physical world. In *ba* form they could leave the land of the dead and travel to other spheres like the sky and earth.[34] The noun *ba* itself or a derivative of it is attested as an element in personal names, with no apparent connection with the afterlife, as early as the reign of Djer.[35] It also appears in the names of the pyramids of some fifth dynasty kings, e.g. *Ḥ*ʿ-bꜣ-Sꜣḥw-Rʿ*, 'The *ba* of Sahure appears', and *Nṯr-bꜣ-Rʿ-nfr=f*, 'The *ba* of Reneferef is divine',[36] although there the word may simply mean 'manifestation', referring to the pyramid itself, rather than *ba* in the specific sense described at the beginning of this paragraph.[37] The earliest unambiguous references to the *ba* of the deceased occur in the Pyramid Texts of the late fifth dynasty and sixth dynasty, and in a few private tombs dating to the latter.[38]

It has been suggested that the rather enigmatic objects known as reserve heads, most of which emanate from fourth dynasty tombs at Giza, may have been intended to function as material representations of the deceased's *ba*.[39] But there is no solid evidence to support this idea, which is based on the assumption that the heads were originally deposited in the tomb shaft or inside the door of the burial chamber and that this location corresponds to the antechamber in Old Kingdom royal pyramids, which is symbolically the *akhet* or horizon, a liminal zone marking the boundary between this world and the next, where the *ba* was supposed to be transfigured.[40] In fact, none of the heads comes from an undisturbed archaeological context, so we cannot say for certain where in the tomb they were placed originally. Moreover, the idea that the burial chamber and antechamber in Old Kingdom royal pyramids represent the underworld

[34] M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 4–5. Cf. section 4.13.

[35] J. Kahl, *Frühägyptisches Wörterbuch* 1 (Wiesbaden, 2002), p. 131; E. Wolf-Brinkmann, *Versuch einer Deutung des Begriffes 'bꜣ' anhand der Überlieferung der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches* (Freiburg, 1968), pp. 7–16.

[36] W. Helck, 'Pyramidennamen', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5 (Wiesbaden, 1984), p. 5; J. Deaton, 'The Old Kingdom Evidence for the Function of Pyramids', *Varia Aegyptiaca* 4 (1988), p. 196.

[37] Cf. section 2.6.4.1.

[38] See L. Žabkar, *A Study of the Ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 51–8; Wolf-Brinkmann, *Versuch einer Deutung des Begriffes 'bꜣ' anhand der Überlieferung der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches*, pp. 33–63. For references to the *ba* in private tombs, see H. Altenmüller, 'Sein Ba möge fortdauern bei Gott', *SAK* 20 (1993), pp. 1–15; H. Altenmüller, *Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu in Saqqara* (Mainz am Rhein, 1998), p. 145 and plate 32; K. Nordh, *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission* (Uppsala, 1996), p. 170; also section 4.13.1.

[39] N. Picardo, '"Semantic Homicide" and the So-called Reserve Heads: The Theme of Decapitation in Egyptian Funerary Religion and Some Implications for the Old Kingdom', *JARCE* 43 (2007), pp. 240–52. For bibliography on these objects, see ibid., p. 227 note 37; M. Nuzzolo, 'The "Reserve Heads": Some Remarks on Their Function and Meaning', in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 200 note 3.

[40] See Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), pp. 244–5.

and horizon respectively has now been discredited,[41] so there is no warrant for interpreting the equivalent spaces in private tombs of the same period as counterparts of those two regions.

2.2. WHAT NEEDS DID THE EGYPTIANS OF THE EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE OLD KINGDOM ENVISAGE THE DEAD AS HAVING IN THE AFTERLIFE AND HOW WERE THESE TO BE MET?

2.2.1. Sustenance in the afterlife and its provision

To judge from the archaeological and textual records, the primary need of the deceased was sustenance. In the period under survey, three different ways of meeting this need were employed. One was to create a venue where offerings of food and drink could be brought and presented to the deceased by the living on a regular and continuous basis. The late predynastic tombs at Tarkhan provide an early example of this practice. Each had an annex attached, to which food and drink offerings were brought. Slits in the wall separating the annex and the burial space itself allowed the deceased to see and have access to what was deposited there.[42] As Snape has noted, we have here an early version of the bipartite tomb that became standard in later periods of Egyptian history, incorporating an underground burial chamber that was sealed off and inaccessible after interment and an above-ground chapel that remained open to those who came to provide offerings for the deceased, whether members of the family or priests employed specifically for that purpose.[43]

During the first dynasty, the offering place could take the form of a separate structure. Immediately to the north of Saqqara mastaba S3505, dating from the reign of Qaa, there was a multi-roomed brick building. In one of the rooms the feet of a pair of standing wooden statues were discovered, which has suggested to some that this could have been an offering chapel.[44] A number of Saqqara mastabas of the late first dynasty had a niche for the performance of the offering cult at the southern end of the

[41] H. Hays, 'Unreading the Pyramids', *BIFAO* 109 (2009), pp. 195–220. For other critiques of this theory, see M. Nuzzolo, 'Royal Architecture and Pyramid Texts: Some Remarks on "Kingship" in the III Millennium BC', in F. Raffaele, M. Nuzzolo, and I. Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology* (Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 178–83; J. Quack, 'Bedeutungen von Pyramiden', *Sokar* 23 (2011), p. 45.

[42] See section 1.9.2.

[43] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 13.

[44] See Köhler in Guksch, Hofmann, and Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten*, p. 21; R. Stadelmann, 'A New Look at the Tombs of the First and Second Dynasties at Abydos and Sakkara and the Evolution of the Pyramid Complex', in K. Daoud, S. Bedier, and S. Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2 (Cairo, 2005), p. 369; S. Hendrickx, 'Les grands mastabas de la 1re dynastie à Saqqara', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 80–1.

east side, and sometimes a smaller one at the northern end as well, features that continue into the second and third dynasties.[45]

In the period under survey, large mastabas of the fourth and early fifth dynasties at Giza and Saqqara provide some of the most impressive examples of the bipartite pattern of tomb design. The focus of the offering cult in these mastabas was a special chapel at the southern end of the east side, either within the superstructure itself or attached to the exterior as a sort of annex.[46] For kings, the counterpart to chapels of this sort was the pyramid temple, originally situated immediately to the north of the royal tomb, but from the beginning of the fourth dynasty onward to the east of it. This in turn was connected by a covered causeway to another cult place, the valley temple which stood at the edge of the cultivation.[47]

Another way of providing sustenance for the deceased in the afterlife during the period covered by our survey was to bury large numbers of vessels and containers for food and drink in the tomb, thus turning it into a sort of storehouse or larder to supply the needs of the occupant. In large mastabas of the first dynasty at North Saqqara, the space below ground was relatively small, sufficient to accommodate the body and a few items of particular value or with a close personal connection to the deceased. The superstructure, on the other hand, contained a large number of compartments or magazines. The mastaba of Hemaka (S3035) is a good example.[48] Its superstructure contained 45 magazines. Although these had been plundered, more than 700 storage jars for food and drink were still in situ when the tomb was discovered.[49] Probably the most striking example of this practice is provided by the step pyramid complex of the third dynasty ruler Djoser at Saqqara. In the galleries beneath the king's tomb around 40,000 stone vessels were discovered.[50] This practice gradually died out after the early third dynasty.[51]

The third way of providing sustenance for the dead was through the medium of image and written or spoken word. This is attested for the first time in tombs of second dynasty date at the site of Helwan, across the river from Saqqara, where lower-ranking Memphite officials were buried.[52] The earliest Egyptian funerary stelae were inscribed with the names and sometimes the titles of the deceased.[53] The stela of a man called

[45] Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 79; A. Spencer, *Early Egypt: The Rise of Civilisation in the Nile Valley* (London, 1993), p. 106.

[46] See the plan of a typical fourth dynasty Giza mastaba in Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 36.

[47] For plans of royal pyramid complexes with mortuary temples from the period under survey, see Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, pp. 84–163.

[48] Emery, *The Tomb of Hemaka*.

[49] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 15.

[50] Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 90.

[51] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 111.

[52] E. Köhler, 'Early Dynastic Society at Memphis', in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, pp. 390–7; E. Köhler, 'The Helwan Cemetery', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 113–30; J. van Wetering, 'The Royal Cemetery of the Early Dynastic Period at Saqqara and the Second Dynasty Royal Tombs', in S. Hendrickx, R. Friedman, K. Ciałowicz, and M. Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2004), pp. 1058–9; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 55–7 and 85–7; T. Wilkinson, 'A Re-Examination of the Early Dynastic Necropolis at Helwan', *MDAIK* 52 (1996), pp. 337–54.

[53] See e.g. Martin, *Umm el-Qaab 7*.

Merka found in the first dynasty Saqqara mastaba S3503 incorporated a seated image of him as well.[54] Now, however, stone slabs from Helwan began to depict the deceased seated before an offering table laden with various edible and non-edible items that they would require in the afterlife.[55] The accompanying inscriptions list not only their names and titles, but the offerings as well. More than forty specimens have been found at Helwan, and additional examples have been discovered at other sites like Saqqara and Abusir.[56]

None of these has been found in a primary context, and the original position where they were set up in the tomb is disputed. Some think they were placed in the burial chamber,[57] others in the superstructure.[58] Nevertheless, their purpose is clear: the image and accompanying writing eternalized the performance of the offering cult, thus ensuring the perpetual provision of food and drink for the tomb owner.[59] This is evident from the fact that, in some examples, the face of the owner has been deliberately damaged as a means of preventing him from consuming the offerings.[60] Depictions like these gradually made the earlier custom of depositing large quantities of foodstuffs and other items in the tomb obsolete.

At Giza in the early fourth dynasty, especially during the reign of Khufu, slab stelae depicting the deceased seated before an offering table with lists of offerings were inserted in the niches of chapels at the south end of the eastern face of some mastabas, where they served as the focal point of the funerary cult.[61] Here too, image and writing perpetuated the cult's performance. In some instances, these slab stelae were covered over and replaced with false doors at a later date.[62] That architectural element makes its first appearance at the beginning of the fourth dynasty.[63] The false door incorporated a scene depicting the tomb owner seated at an offering table, inscriptions recording his names and titles, and an offering formula requesting that food, drink, and other

[54] For this object, see Köhler in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, p. 386; G. Martin, 'The Stela and Grave of Merka in Saqqara North', ibid., pp. 463–76; D. O'Connor, 'Sabef and Merika: An Early Dynastic Conundrum', in E. Frood and A. McDonald (eds), *Decorum and Experience: Essays in Ancient Culture for John Baines* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 269–76.

[55] E. Köhler and J. Jones, *Helwan 2: The Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom Funerary Relief Slabs* (Rahden, 2009). Cf. Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 220–3; A. Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom* (Wiesbaden, 1997), p. 112; Wilkinson, *MDAIK* 52 (1996), pp. 348–51.

[56] Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 87. Some, e.g. Regulski, *BiOr* 68 (2011), p. 24, think that the seals discussed in section 2.1.2 are precursors of such stelae, but this is doubtful.

[57] e.g. Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, p. 112; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 221.

[58] Köhler and Jones, *Helwan 2*, pp. 85–91. [59] Ibid., pp. 93–4. [60] Ibid., p. 5 note 8.

[61] P. Der Manuelian, *Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis* (New Haven and Philadelphia, 2003).

[62] Ibid., pp. xxxi and 139.

[63] S. Wiebach, *Die ägyptische Scheintür: Morphologische Studien zur Entwicklung und Bedeutung der Hauptkultstelle in den Privat-Gräbern des Alten Reiches* (Hamburg, 1981). For a concise English summary with bibliography, see S. Wiebach-Koepke, 'False Door', in D. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* 1 (Oxford, 2001), pp. 498–501.

necessities be given to the deceased.[64] By reciting this formula, a visitor to the tomb could give sustenance to its owner without physically presenting any offerings. As early as the late fourth dynasty, a canonical offering list had come into being. This comprised more than ninety items, arranged in a more or less fixed sequence.[65] It appears in private tombs first, and subsequently in the mortuary temples of kings in the early fifth dynasty.[66]

As time went on, offering chapels became larger and their decoration grew more elaborate, including scenes depicting people bringing offerings to the deceased.[67] Here too images, supplemented with the appropriate written words, could serve as a substitute for the real thing. Other tomb scenes depicting activities like agriculture, fishing, and hunting are seen by some as serving the same function, the produce or the game being intended for the tomb owner's nourishment. However, the meaning of these is disputed and their significance is still unclear.[68]

Two things are worth noting about these various methods of providing sustenance for the dead. First, they were not mutually exclusive. The adoption of one did not rule out having recourse to another along with it. Although thousands of stone vessels were deposited in the galleries beneath the pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, there was also a mortuary temple immediately to the north of the pyramid where offerings could be presented. Likewise, the use of image and the written or spoken word to ensure the regular provision of offerings was intended to complement rather than replace the actual deposit of food, drink, and other commodities.[69] The second point to note is that not all of these methods originated among the highest levels of society. The tombs at Helwan where inscribed offering slabs first appear, for example, were predominantly those of lower-ranking Memphite officials, the more important ones having their burial place across the river at Saqqara.

[64] For the development of this formula during the period under survey, see Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 3–20; G. Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches* (Mainz am Rhein, 1986).

[65] See W. Barta, *Die altägyptische Opferliste von der Frühzeit bis zur griechisch-römischen Epoche* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 47–50 and Abb. 4 (there identified as Listentyp A).

[66] M. Smith, 'Democratization of the Afterlife', in W. Wendrich and J. Dieleman (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2009), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, pp. 8–9.

[67] See e.g. E. El-Metwally, *Entwicklung der Grabdekoration in den altägyptischen Privatgräbern* (Wiesbaden, 1992).

[68] R. van Walsem, *Iconography of Old Kingdom Elite Tombs: Analysis & Interpretation, Theoretical and Methodological Aspects* (Leuven and Dudley, 2005), and S. Verma, *Cultural Expression in the Old Kingdom Elite Tomb* (Oxford, 2014), provide useful discussions of the problems involved in the interpretation of these scenes. L. Roeten, *The Decoration on the Cult Chapel Walls of the Old Kingdom Tombs at Giza: A New Approach to their Interaction* (Leiden and Boston, 2014), provides a diachronic overview of their development at one specific site.

[69] A stela from the sixth dynasty tomb of Khentika at Balat in the Dakhla Oasis advises visitors that they will be loved by the king if they recite the offering formula inscribed on it and give the tomb owner bread and beer from what is in their hands, but then goes on to say that if there is nothing in their hands, it will suffice for them to utter a request that he be given bread and beer. See J. Osing, *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry* (Mainz am Rhein, 1982), plates 4 and 58.

2.2.2. Tools, weapons, furniture, and other objects for everyday use

Alongside containers for food and drink, a range of other objects have been found in tombs from the period under survey. The first dynasty royal tombs at Abydos were extensively plundered, but still preserved a considerable number of grave goods when discovered. These include seals and seal impressions, pottery and stone vessels, copper chisels, axes, and adzes, glaze composition inlays and beads, bone arrowheads, and pieces of furniture made from wood or ivory. Subsidiary graves around the royal tombs contained items of a similar nature.[70] Most items found in private tombs of this period were indistinguishable from those used in daily life: weapons, tools, amulets, gaming pieces, and so on.[71] Wengrow has drawn attention to the fact that some large mastabas at Saqqara mimic estates, having their own granaries, both real and model ones, storage bins, and boats, as well as agricultural implements and tools appropriate for various crafts.[72] If one accepts the idea that grave goods were intended to be used by the tomb owner in the afterlife, then the fact that objects like these were deposited in tombs indicates that the deceased were expected to perform the same sort of activities in the next world as they did in this one.

In addition to foodstuffs, the offering lists to which reference has been made in section 2.2.1 include a range of other items like textiles and furniture, thus providing valuable supplementary information about what the well-equipped tomb should contain.[73] As time goes on, depictions and lists of the items that the deceased required in the afterlife tend to replace grave goods as such. In the third dynasty mastaba of Hesire at Saqqara, for example, paintings in the corridor on the east side depict pieces of furniture, including beds, chairs, and stools, as well as tools, jars of oil, games, and other everyday objects. These are accompanied by inscriptions identifying the various items.[74] The trend is even more noticeable in the fourth dynasty, when there was a general reduction in the number of objects actually deposited in the subterranean part of the tomb and a corresponding increase in the amount of decoration in the superstructure. Where grave goods were deposited, models of items increasingly replaced the full-size versions.[75] Even intact tombs, of which a number have been discovered, were relatively sparsely equipped with grave goods, and many burials from this period had none at all.[76]

[70] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 22–35.
[71] Spencer, *Early Egypt*, p. 70.
[72] Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 243–5.
[73] See Köhler and Jones, *Helwan 2*, pp. 51–6.
[74] Spencer, *Early Egypt*, p. 106; W. Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt: Life in Death for Rich and Poor* (London, 2003), p. 14; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 115–16; El-Metwally, *Entwicklung der Grabdekoration in den altägyptischen Privatgräbern*, p. 22.
[75] S. Allen, 'Miniature and Model Vessels in Ancient Egypt', in M. Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology* (Prague, 2006), pp. 19–24.
[76] For descriptions of some fourth dynasty burials, see Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 16–26.

2.2.3. Statues and servant figures

Statues of deceased kings played an important role in the cult performed in royal mortuary and valley temples during the period under survey.[77] But they were not the only ones for whom such objects were made. Statues of the tomb owner, and sometimes statues of his relatives, were set up in a number of private tombs as well. These were placed in the *serdab*, a small chamber in the superstructure of the tomb, sealed off except for a narrow slit.[78] The earliest known example of a *serdab* is the one to the north of the step pyramid at Saqqara, in which the famous statue of the third dynasty ruler Djoser, now in the Cairo Museum, was found. The mastaba of Khabausokar at Saqqara (mid-third dynasty to early fourth dynasty) was one of the first private tombs to incorporate this feature.[79] The precise function of the statues placed in the *serdab* is uncertain. Some think they provided a dwelling place for the *ka* of the deceased,[80] but there is no evidence to connect the *ka* with these statues. Another theory is that they were intended to serve as a replacement body, in the event that something happened to the real body of the tomb owner.[81]

From the late fourth or early fifth dynasty, small figures of men and women performing various tasks, chiefly associated with food production, began to be placed in *serdabs* as well.[82] Some have personal names inscribed on them. It has been suggested that these represent dependents or members of the deceased's household.[83] They may be compared with the miniature models of inanimate objects that proliferate in tombs at this period. Presumably their function was to perform the same tasks for the tomb owner in the afterlife that they did in this one. Because each is shown doing a specific type of work, their purpose is more readily discernible than is the case with the more generic human figures found in some predynastic graves.[84] If this interpretation is correct, it reinforces the impression gained from the other evidence we have considered in section 2.2 that the needs of the deceased in the hereafter were not thought to be very different to those that they had when they were alive.

[77] See D. Arnold, 'Old Kingdom Statues in Their Architectural Setting', in D. Arnold and C. Ziegler (eds), *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), pp. 41–4; D. Stockfisch, *Untersuchungen zum Totenkult des ägyptischen Königs im Alten Reich* 2 (Hamburg, 2003), pp. 15–41.

[78] Ibid., pp. 44–9; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 66–7; Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, pp. 106–10.

[79] Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt*, p. 14.

[80] e.g. Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 66.

[81] Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt*, p. 16.

[82] Ibid., pp. 20–1; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 66–7.

[83] A. Roth, 'The Meaning of Menial Labor: "Servant Statues" in Old Kingdom Serdabs', *JARCE* 39 (2002), pp. 103–21; M. Hill, 'Note on the Dating of Certain Stone Serving Statuettes', in Arnold and Ziegler (eds), *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, pp. 386–95.

[84] See section 1.3.

2.3. WAS THERE A PARTICULAR PLACE OR LOCATION IN WHICH EGYPTIANS OF THE EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD AND THE FIRST PART OF THE OLD KINGDOM BELIEVED THEY WOULD SPEND THE AFTERLIFE AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THIS LIKE AND HOW WAS IT REACHED?

2.3.1. The tomb as the house of the deceased

In the second dynasty, one model adopted for elite tombs at Saqqara was that of the house, creating an underground set of rooms that imitated a dwelling place.[85] In such tombs, an entrance led down to a long rock-cut corridor flanked with storage rooms on either side, at the end of which were further rooms corresponding to the living quarters. The superstructure was solid, generally filled in with rubble. A similar plan was used for two second dynasty royal tombs at Saqqara, those of Hetepsekhemwi (or possibly Nebre) and Ninetjer.[86] Both comprise a series of underground galleries hewn into the rock and entered from the north, with storerooms opening off a central descending corridor that leads to the burial chamber. This has given rise to the view that the dead were believed to spend the afterlife in the tomb itself.[87] According to Allen, prior to the fifth dynasty, the afterlife of non-royal individuals was restricted to the tomb and its immediate environs.[88]

Bolshakov has developed a more extreme version of this theory, centred around the idea of a double world involving the *ka*.[89] According to him, this was an idealized version of the tomb owner's household. In effect, each owner of a decorated tomb in

[85] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 21–2; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 77–8 and 80–5; Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt*, p. 12; T. Wilkinson, 'Before the Pyramids: Early Developments in Egyptian Royal Funerary Ideology', in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, p. 1132; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 240; C. Lacher, 'Das Grab des Hetepsechemwui/Raneb in Saqqara—Ideen zur baugeschichtlichen Entwicklung', in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, pp. 435–7; P. Jánosi, 'The Tombs of Officials: Houses of Eternity', in Arnold and Ziegler (eds), *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, pp. 27–9; A. Roth, 'Social Change in the Fourth Dynasty: The Spatial Organization of Pyramids, Tombs, and Cemeteries', *JARCE* 30 (1993), pp. 40–2; C. Lacher-Raschdorff, *Das Grab des Königs Ninetjer in Saqqara: Architektonische Entwicklung frühzeitlicher Grabanlagen in Ägypten* (Wiesbaden, 2014), pp. 139–40.

[86] Van Wetering in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, pp. 1064–9; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 240–3; D. O'Connor, *Abydos: Egypt's First Pharaohs and the Cult of Osiris* (London, 2009), p. 156; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 78–80; Lacher in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, pp. 427–51; C. Lacher, 'The Tomb of King Ninetjer at Saqqara', in R. Friedman and P. Fiske (eds), *Egypt at its Origins* 3 (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2011), pp. 213–31; Lacher-Raschdorff, *Das Grab des Königs Ninetjer in Saqqara*, pp. 139–44 and 148–52.

[87] See e.g. Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 92.

[88] J. Allen, 'Some Aspects of the Non-Royal Afterlife in the Old Kingdom', in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, p. 10.

[89] Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, pp. 267–81.

the Old Kingdom was absolute master in his own personal cosmos constituted by the representations on the walls of that tomb. Thus there were as many double worlds as there were decorated tombs. These co-existed with one another but there was no connection or contact of any sort between them. There was no such thing as a communal afterlife. According to Bolshakov, it was not until the end of the Old Kingdom that such a concept arose.[90]

This view is contradicted by Egyptian sources, however. Already in the fifth dynasty, offering formulas inscribed in private tombs express the wish that the tomb owner might join or be integrated with groups of other deceased individuals, for example, the *imakhu*, 'revered ones', the *kas*, or the justified ones.[91] Moreover, some Old Kingdom inscriptions describe the cemetery as a *nỉw.t*, 'town' or 'city', thus implying that those buried there were members of a community in some sense.[92] A few sources may conceptualize the hereafter as a *sp3.t*, 'nome', i.e. a spatial and demographic unit on a larger scale, although the interpretation of these is not certain.[93] But the other evidence demonstrates clearly that the concept of a communal afterlife was already well established before the end of the period covered by our survey.

2.3.2. The west as the abode of the dead and its location

Where did those who participated in this afterlife spend their time? The tomb served as a sort of base for the deceased, but how rigidly did its confines circumscribe their movements and other activities? As early as the first dynasty, seal impressions from the tombs of Den and Qaa acquaint us with a deity connected with the dead who is called Khentiamentiu, 'Foremost of the westerners'. This name is determined with a jackal sign.[94] From the fifth dynasty onward, 'Foremost of the westerners' is attested as an epithet of Anubis and Osiris.[95] Whether it was already employed to denote other gods in the first dynasty, or whether it represents the name of an autonomous deity, is uncertain. Although the precise significance of its initial element has been disputed,[96] there can be little doubt that the second element of this name or epithet refers to the deceased. Thus the conception of the west as a land of the dead was already in existence at this early date.[97]

[90] Ibid., pp. 284–90. [91] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 17.
[92] Allen in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, p. 10. [93] Ibid., p. 11.
[94] G. Dreyer, 'Ein Siegel der frühzeitlichen Königsnekropole von Abydos', *MDAIK* 43 (1987), pp. 33–43; G. Dreyer, 'The Tombs of the First and Second Dynasties at Abydos and Saqqara', in Z. Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids* (Cairo, 2003), pp. 62–3. Cf. W. Kaiser, 'Zum Siegel mit frühen Königsnamen von Umm el-Qaab', *MDAIK* 43 (1987), pp. 114–19.
[95] See DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, pp. 162–7 and 384–9.
[96] Most understand the initial element *ḫnty* in the name to mean 'foremost, at the head of' (i.e. ruler of), but W. Federn, '*Ḥtp (r)dj(w) (n) ʾInpw*; zum Verständnis der vor-osirianischen Opferformel', *MDAIK* 16 (1958), pp. 126–7, interprets it in a purely spatial sense, 'in front of'.
[97] For an attempt to trace the development of this conception using archaeological evidence, see E. Köhler, 'The Orientation of Cult Niches and Burial Chambers in Early Dynastic Tombs at Helwan', in

Offering formulas in tombs of the fourth dynasty express the hope that the deceased will come to the west as a possessor of *imakh*, the status or quality of 'revered one',[98] those of the fifth dynasty that they will travel upon the roads to the beautiful west.[99] Thus the west was a region distinct from the land of the living, which could only be reached by means of a journey. But was this region simply the necropolis itself, or was the west already envisaged as a distinct sphere of the cosmos, like the underworld in later periods of Egyptian history? In some Old Kingdom sources, 'west' is clearly just another designation for the cemetery. Compare fourth dynasty offering formulas where wishes for burial in the west vary with those requesting interment in the western desert or the necropolis.[100] But in other sources the sense is more ambiguous. It may be that the term 'west' was used to denote both the cemetery and a separate 'land of the dead'. The concepts may also have overlapped to a considerable extent. The evidence at our disposal does not permit us to know for certain.

Some think that the alignment of the tombs in the first dynasty royal cemetery of Umm el-Qaab at Abydos provides evidence of belief in a topographically distinct land of the dead. Those belonging to Djer and Djet have a niche in the inner face of the southwest wall.[101] Some of the subsidiary graves associated with the latter's tomb have niches in the same location.[102] All royal tombs of the first dynasty, from Djer to Qaa, were surrounded by subsidiary graves, except for the southern part of the southwest side, where a gap was left.[103] The reason for this, according to one view, is that a cleft in the hills of the western escarpment about 1 km due south of Umm el-Qaab was regarded as an entrance to the underworld by the Egyptians.[104] The southern part of the southwest side of each tomb was aligned with this cleft, so a space had to be left to allow the king to travel from the tomb to the underworld without encountering any obstacles.[105] The niches in the inner face of the southwest wall in some tombs functioned as doors to facilitate exit.[106]

There are several problems with this theory. The first is that there is no evidence for belief in a subterranean land of the dead, corresponding to the later *duat*, at this early date. In fact, the oldest references to the *duat* suggest that it was originally conceived of

L. Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2012), pp. 279–97, especially pp. 292–7.

[98] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 9. Cf. Allen in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, p. 10.

[99] Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 17.

[100] Ibid., p. 9.

[101] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 31 and 36.

[102] Ibid., p. 36.

[103] Ibid., p. 32 and figure 12.

[104] See A. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom: Philological Aspects of a Continuous Tradition in Egyptian Mortuary Literature* 1 (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2013), pp. 524–5 note 1509.

[105] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 256; Wilkinson in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, p. 1131; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 70–1; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 75.

[106] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, p. 31.

as a celestial region, and only later as a place below the ground.[107] A second problem becomes apparent if one looks at a map of Umm el-Qaab and the surrounding area.[108] Contrary to what has been claimed, the southern parts of the southwest sides of the royal tombs are not actually aligned with the supposed entrance to the underworld which, as noted above, lies due south and not southwest of them. A straight line drawn at right angles from the southwest wall of any tomb will intersect the wadi leading up to the cleft in the escarpment that some have identified as this entrance, not lead to the cleft itself. It could hardly fail to do so, since a bend in the wadi here causes it to curve around Umm el-Qaab on three sides.

Inspection of a map reveals a third problem as well. Since the cemetery at Umm el-Qaab tended to grow in a south-southwesterly direction during the first dynasty, the location selected for each new tomb lay, more often than not, directly southwest of one or more existing tombs. As a result, the new tomb and its subsidiary graves would block the carefully planned gap left between the rows of subsidiary graves belonging to the earlier one. Thus, Djet's complex blocks the way leading southwest from Djer's tomb, Meret-neith's and Anedjib's that leading southwest from Djet's tomb, and Qaa's that leading southwest from Semeherkhet's tomb. If the purpose of the gaps was to allow the occupants of these tombs unimpeded movement in the direction of the underworld to the southwest, then it was rather thoughtless of their successors to hamper their mobility in this way. This being the case, it seems improbable that the gaps served to link the tombs with a distant topographical feature. Perhaps they had a more utilitarian purpose connected with the tomb itself or its immediate surroundings, like that of providing the living with access to a chapel near the southwestern side, as O'Connor has conjectured.[109]

A fourth problem concerns the interpretation of the niches attested in the inner face of the southwest wall of some tombs at Umm el-Qaab. If the function of these was to allow the occupant of the tomb to leave the burial place then it is curious that they are only found in those of two kings, Djer and Djet. Were the others expected to remain in their tombs permanently, denied access to the underworld? This casts doubt upon the idea that the niches functioned as exit doors. Whatever their purpose, since the niches occur in both royal and non-royal tombs, one did not need to be a king to enjoy their benefits.

2.3.3. Evidence for a celestial abode of the dead?

2.3.3.1. Astral elements in names of royal domains

Were the deceased believed to range even further afield during the period under survey? Seal impressions found in tombs of the first three dynasties sometimes record the names of royal estates or domains from which goods deposited in them were

[107] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 2–3.
[108] There is a convenient one in Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, figure 2.
[109] O'Connor, *Abydos*, p. 155.

brought. Occasionally these incorporate the noun *sbꜣ*, 'star'. Thus, a domain established by Anedjib was called *Ḥr-sbꜣ-ḥ.t*, 'Horus, star of the corporation'. Hetepsekhemwi founded one called *Ḥr-ḫʿ-sbꜣ*, 'Horus who appears (as) a star'. Khasekhemwi established a domain called *Ḥr-sbꜣ-bꜣw*, 'Horus, star of might', and Djoser one called *Ḥr-sbꜣ-ḫnty-p.t*, 'Horus, star pre-eminent in the sky'.[110] According to one view, such names refer to the kings who founded the domains and attest to a belief that they expected to spend their afterlife among the stars.[111]

That the names of the domains refer to their founders is theoretically possible, since we know that kings bore the title 'Horus', even though some think that the initial element in these names refers to the god Horus rather than the king.[112] More problematic is the idea that they provide evidence of a belief in an astral afterlife. Although royal domains certainly contributed to the upkeep of a ruler's funerary cult, there is no evidence that they were founded exclusively for that purpose, so why should the names of these institutions have reference to the anticipated fate of their founders in the hereafter? This view ignores the possibility that the noun 'star' might be used figuratively to denote the living king in the names of these domains, assuming that the names actually refer to the king in the first place.[113] Compare the royal name *Pꜣ-sbꜣ-ḫʿ-n-niw.t*, meaning 'The star that appeared in Thebes', given at birth to two kings of the twenty-first dynasty and thus hardly likely to have reference to their posthumous existence.[114]

2.3.3.2. Stairways to the stars?

The tombs of Den, Anedjib, and Semeherkhet at Umm el-Qaab had stairways giving access to the burial chamber that descended from the northeast. That of Qaa, Semeherkhet's successor and the last king of the first dynasty, had a similar stairway, only this descended from the northwest. Since northeast corresponds to local east and northwest to local north at this site, Wilkinson speculates that this change in the orientation of the entrance stairway may reflect the rise of a belief in an astral afterlife, the idea being that a stairway on the 'north' side would facilitate the king's ascension to the circumpolar stars.[115] We have no way of knowing whether this was so. There may have been a more practical motive for the relocation of the stairway in the tomb of Qaa. Perhaps the builders decided that the proximity of Semeherkhet's tomb to the northeast left insufficient space for one in the usual position. In any event, entrances on the

[110] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 119–22.

[111] Wilkinson in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, p. 1139.

[112] Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 1, p. 104; J. Kahl, *'Re is my Lord': Searching for the Rise of the Sun God at the Dawn of Egyptian History* (Wiesbaden, 2007), p. 2.

[113] *Wb.* 4, 83, 4. For parallels to this usage in later periods, see A. Winkler, 'A Royal Star: On the "Miracle of the Star" in Thutmoses III's Gebel Barkal Stela and a Note on the King as a Star in Personal Names', *RdE* 64 (2013), pp. 238–47.

[114] Winkler, *RdE* 64 (2013), pp. 245–6.

[115] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 257.

north side become a standard feature of both royal and non-royal tombs from the late first dynasty onwards, which is normally cited as evidence of belief in an astral afterlife for the same reasons as those given by Wilkinson.[116] But the existence of such a belief is not documented by any textual evidence until the end of the fifth dynasty, when the Pyramid Texts first associate the deceased with the stars.[117]

Some believe that the shape of tombs, pyramids in particular, provides evidence for belief in a celestial afterlife during the period under survey. According to one view, the royal tomb 'was designed with the purpose of enabling the ruler's entry into heaven'.[118] The implication of this is that the next world was celestial, or at least included a celestial component. The earliest known Egyptian tomb with a stepped structure is a mastaba at Saqqara dating to the reign of Anedjib (S3038). This originally had the form of a truncated step pyramid with eight steps on its north, south, and west sides (the east had a vertical façade), a feature that was covered up in subsequent building phases when the tomb was converted into an ordinary mastaba.[119] Subsequently the step pyramid form was adopted by Djoser and some of his successors in the third dynasty and early fourth dynasty.[120] Djoser's pyramid has been identified by some as a stairway to the sky.[121] The fact that its entrance is on the north side has given rise to the conclusion that the destination to which it led was specifically the northern part of the sky, among the circumpolar stars.[122] Another interpretation is that the pyramid allowed the king to ascend to the sun god.[123]

But all of this is surmise. As Quack has shown, there is no ancient Egyptian evidence to support the idea that the step pyramid was seen as a stairway to the sky.[124] The idea that the Egyptian word for pyramid is derived from the verb *ʿr*, meaning 'ascend', advocated by some, is based on a misreading. The correct reading of the word for pyramid is actually *mḥr* and not *mr*, so there is no possibility of an association with *ʿr*. A sign resembling a step pyramid is sometimes employed to determine verbs meaning 'ascend' like *ʿr*. But that does not have the same number of steps as Djoser's pyramid. Moreover, this determinative did not come into use until after step pyramids had

[116] See e.g. A. Radwan, 'Step Pyramids', in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 99.

[117] See R.O. Faulkner, 'The King and the Star-Religion in the Pyramid Texts', *JNES* 25 (1966), pp. 153–61, especially pp. 155–7 for the connection with the circumpolar stars.

[118] Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 92.

[119] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 30; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, pp. 80–1; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 75–7; Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* 1, pp. 82–91 and plates 21–6; Stadelmann in Daoud, Bedier, and Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2, pp. 366–7; Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 78.

[120] Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, pp. 84–100; M. Verner, *Abusir IX: The Pyramid Complex of Raneferef* (Prague, 2006), pp. 177–8.

[121] See e.g. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 35; Radwan in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 90; Verner, *Abusir IX*, p. 174.

[122] Radwan in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 99; F. Friedman, 'Notions of Cosmos in the Step Pyramid Complex', in P. Der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* 1 (Boston, 1996), p. 344; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 98; Verner, *Abusir IX*, p. 176; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 258.

[123] Verner, *Abusir IX*, p. 174.

[124] Quack, *Sokar* 23 (2011), pp. 48–9.

ceased to be built. There would have been little reason to employ an obsolete structure as a determinative, so the sign probably represents something else, e.g. a double staircase. Quack makes the further point that step pyramids were soon replaced by true pyramids, whose smooth sides would have hindered rather than aided ascent, so the conception of the king's tomb as a stairway, even if it did have currency at one time, was relatively short-lived. As Quack observes, the idea was unknown to Egyptians of later periods.

According to Pyramid Text Spell 267, first attested in the late fifth dynasty pyramid of Unis, the deceased king has set up a stairway so that he can go to the sky by means of it.[125] Spell 508, first attested in the sixth dynasty pyramid of Pepi I, states that the king has made the sun's rays into a stairway beneath his feet so that he can go to his mother on it.[126] Some think that the stairway to which reference is made in these spells is the pyramid. This idea is based on the theory that the true pyramid form was a stylized representation of the sun's rays.[127] If so, even the true pyramid, despite its smooth sides, could function as a stairway to the sky for the deceased. But Quack has shown that this theory is a purely modern construct. In fact, there is no ancient evidence to support the idea that the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom associated the true pyramid form with the sun or its rays.[128]

Scenes in a number of tombs from the late fourth dynasty onward depict the tomb owner, and sometimes another figure as well, grasping papyrus stems in a papyrus thicket. Male figures also hold detached stems of the plant above their heads. The act involved is described as *sšš wꜣḏ*, which has been variously translated as 'sorting out papyrus', 'uprooting papyrus', or 'rattling papyrus'. In several tombs it is specified that this action is performed for the goddess Hathor.[129] A variety of interpretations have been proposed for it, but its significance remains obscure. According to one theory, the tomb owner uproots or tears the papyrus stems in order to fashion them into a ladder to the sky on which he or she can climb in order to reach Hathor, after which the deceased can travel through the day and night skies.[130] If so, this would constitute evidence of belief in a celestial afterlife during our period, but the idea remains highly speculative.

[125] K. Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1 (Leipzig, 1908), p. 190, §365a.

[126] K. Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2 (Leipzig, 1910), pp. 119–20, §1108a–c.

[127] Verner, *Abusir IX*, pp. 178–9; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 35.

[128] Quack, *Sokar* 23 (2011), pp. 46–7.

[129] See G. Lapp, '*zšn ḏwjt* und *zšš wꜣḏ*', *Göttinger Miszellen* 239 (2013), pp. 62–3; A. Woods, '*Zšš Wꜣḏ* Scenes of the Old Kingdom Revisited', in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 314–19; W. Wettengel, 'Zu den Darstellungen des Papyrusraschelns', *SAK* 19 (1992), pp. 323–38; Y. M. Harpur, '*Zšš Wꜣḏ* Scenes of the Old Kingdom', *Göttinger Miszellen* 38 (1980), pp. 53–61; A. Morales, 'From Voice to Wall: Verschriftung and Verschriftlichung in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts', in M. Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures: A Multidisciplinary View* (Berlin, 2016), pp. 115–16, all with references to earlier literature.

[130] H. Altenmüller, 'Der Himmelsaufstieg des Grabherrn: Zu den Szenen des *zšš wꜣḏ* in den Gräbern des Alten Reiches', *SAK* 30 (2002), pp. 1–42, followed in Theis, *Deine Seele zum Himmel, dein Leichnam zur Erde*, pp. 163–5, and Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*, pp. 115–16.

Each pyramid, whether stepped or true, had a name. More than twenty names of this sort are known from the Old Kingdom alone.[131] According to Quirke, two of these names, those of the pyramids of Djoser and the fourth dynasty ruler Djedefre, are explicitly stellar.[132] In fact, this is only true of the latter, *Sḥdw-Ḏd=f-Rʿ*, 'Firmanent of Djedefre', and even this could be interpreted metaphorically, as a designation of the place where the king appears.[133] What Quirke claims is the name of Djoser's pyramid, *Ḥr-sbꜣ-ḫnty-p.t*, 'Horus, star pre-eminent in the sky', is actually the name of a royal estate or domain founded by that king, not his burial place.[134] If pyramids actually did have stellar associations, one might have expected a higher proportion of pyramid names to reflect this.

We have already seen that the theory according to which the Egyptians conceptualized the pyramid burial chamber as the underworld and the antechamber as the *akhet* or horizon has been discredited.[135] The idea was originally based on the distribution of references to these two regions in the burial chambers and antechambers of the inscribed pyramids of the fifth and sixth dynasties, but some have attempted to apply it to the uninscribed royal tombs of our period as well.[136] Likewise discredited as a result are those attempts that have been made to apply the same schema to private tombs of the Old Kingdom.[137]

2.3.3.3. The airshafts in the pyramid of Khufu

One specific feature of the pyramid of Khufu at Giza has been interpreted as evidence of belief in a celestial afterlife during the period under survey. These are its two pairs of airshafts or model corridors. Of the first pair, one shaft originates in the north wall of the King's Chamber, the other in the south wall. These exit at two points high up in the north and south faces of the pyramid. The two other shafts originate in the north and south walls of the Queen's Chamber, but do not reach as far as the exterior of the

[131] J. Bennett, 'Pyramid Names', *JEA* 52 (1966), pp. 174–6; Helck in Helck and Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5, pp. 4–6; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, pp. 16–17; S. Quirke, *The Cult of Ra: Sun-Worship in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2001), pp. 116–17.

[132] Ibid., p. 117.

[133] Radwan in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 95, says the name of the pyramid complex of Djoser was *qbḥw nṯrw*, which he translates as 'libation of the gods'.

[134] See section 2.3.3.1. [135] See section 2.1.4.

[136] See e.g. J. Allen, 'Why a Pyramid? Pyramid Religion', in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, pp. 24–7; K. Kuraszkiewicz, 'An Afterworld for Netjerykhet?', in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 139–42.

[137] e.g. D. Vischak, 'Common Ground Between Pyramid Texts and Old Kingdom Tomb Design: The Case of Ankhmahor', *JARCE* 40 (2003), pp. 133–57; Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), pp. 244–5; J. Burn, 'The Pyramid Texts and Tomb Decoration in Dynasty Six: The Tomb of Mehu at Saqqara', *BACE* 22 (2011), pp. 17–34. Cf. criticism of these authors by Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*, p. 111 note 177.

monument.[138] Many believe that these were supposed to allow the king to leave the pyramid and travel to the northern and southern sky.[139] According to Stadelmann, the verb *pr*, 'go forth', may be inscribed in the southern shaft leading from the Queen's Chamber, which he interprets as evidence supporting that theory.[140] One must reserve judgement about the reading of the signs in question until there is a proper publication. If the verb is actually written in this shaft, must it refer specifically to going forth to the sky or stars?

Some think that the shafts of Khufu's pyramid were deliberately aligned with the culminations of certain stars to make it easier for him to reach them.[141] According to one theory, the King's Chamber north shaft was aligned with the culmination of the star Thuban, the north pole star during the period when the pyramid was built; the King' Chamber south shaft with that of Alnitak, part of the belt of Orion; the Queen's Chamber north shaft with that of Kochab in the constellation Ursa Minor; and the Queen's Chamber south shaft with that of Sirius. But this idea has been disproved by Wall, who points out that the culminations of these four stars could only have been observed together *c.*2400 BC, more than a century after the death and burial of Khufu.[142] Wall also notes that we have no evidence that star culminations were of interest or importance in the Old Kingdom, and observes that all four shafts bend, not once but several times. Given the numerous angle fluctuations, depending on which parts of the shafts one measured, they could be construed as pointing towards one hundred different stars.[143]

If shafts like the ones in Khufu's pyramid really were supposed to facilitate the occupant's ascent to the sky, why does one pair terminate in the masonry of the structure? If they really did confer a specific benefit or advantage in the afterlife, one wonders why such a useful feature was not incorporated in subsequent pyramids. The only other one to have them is the pyramid of Khafre, and the shafts in that monument were left unfinished.[144]

[138] Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, pp. 112–14; M. Haase, 'Dienten die oberen Schächte in der Cheops-Pyramide zur Belüftung der Grabkammer?', in V. Callender, L. Bareš, M. Bárta, J. Janák, and J. Krejčí (eds), *Times, Signs and Pyramids: Studies in Honour of Miroslav Verner on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Prague, 2011), pp. 135–56.

[139] See e.g. A. Badawy, 'The Stellar Destiny of the Pharaoh and the So-called Air Shafts in Cheops' Pyramid', *MIO* 10 (1964), pp. 189–206; R. Stadelmann, 'Die sogenannten Luftkanäle der Cheopspyramide: Modellkorridore für den Aufstieg des Königs zum Himmel', *MDAIK* 50 (1994), pp. 285–94; Haase in Callender, Bareš, Bárta, Janák, and Krejčí (eds), *Times, Signs and Pyramids*, pp. 138–40.

[140] R. Stadelmann, 'The Pyramids of the Fourth Dynasty', in Hawass (ed.) *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 125.

[141] See the survey of such views in R. Chadwick, 'Celestial Alignments and the Soul-Shafts of the Khufu Pyramid', *JSSEA* 28 (2001), pp. 15–25.

[142] J. Wall, 'The Star Alignment Hypothesis for the Great Pyramid Shafts', *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 38 (2007), pp. 199–206, with bibliography on pp. 205–6.

[143] Ibid., p. 199.

[144] I.E.S. Edwards, 'The Air-Channels of Chephren's Pyramid', in W. Simpson and W. Davis (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt, The Aegean, and the Sudan: Essays in Honor of Dows Dunham on the Occasion of his 90th Birthday, June 1, 1980* (Boston, 1981), pp. 55–7.

2.3.4. Boat burials as evidence for the location and nature of the abode of the dead?

A final topic to be considered under this heading is boat burials. Boats were buried adjacent to a number of tombs during the period under survey. These could be of considerable size. The earliest known boat burial is that discovered next to Mastaba S3357 at Saqqara, dating to the reign of Aha.[145] Three other first dynasty mastabas at Saqqara, S3036, S3503, and S3506, had boat burials associated with them as well.[146] Another mastaba at Abu Roash, belonging to an official of the reign of Den, had two boat burials associated with it.[147] Boat burials have also been discovered adjacent to tombs of first dynasty officials at Helwan and Abusir.[148] No boats have ever been discovered in association with royal tombs of this period, but fourteen wooden vessels, each *c.*25 m long, thus larger than those discovered at Saqqara and Helwan, were buried along the southwestern side of a funerary enclosure at north Abydos assignable to the second half of the first dynasty, although not to a specific king.[149]

At a later date, boats began to be buried near royal tombs as well. Boat burials, or boat-shaped structures and pits, have been discovered in a number of royal funerary complexes from the Old Kingdom.[150] Moreover, a mud brick boat model some 30 m long was discovered outside of the enclosure wall of the solar temple built by the fifth dynasty ruler Niuserre.[151] Probably the most famous boat burials from our period are the two dismantled vessels discovered to the south of the pyramid of Khufu at Giza.[152]

Most assume that the purpose of burying boats adjacent to tombs or other funerary monuments was so that the owners could make use of them in the afterlife. Thus the deceased, both royal and non-royal, had need of this form of transportation in the hereafter. A range of divergent points of view exist as to why the dead needed

[145] W. Emery, *Excavations at Saqqara 1937–1938: Hor-Aha* (Cairo, 1939), p. 18; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 80; Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 73; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 62.

[146] See Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* 1, p. 75 (S3036); W. Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* 2 (London, 1954), p. 138; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 68 (S3503); W. Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* 3 (London, 1958), pp. 42 and 49 (S3506).

[147] T. Wilkinson, *MDAIK* 52 (1996), p. 352; A. Klasens, 'The Excavations of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities at Abu-Roash. Report of the Third Season: 1959', *OMRO* 42 (1961), pp. 110–11.

[148] Köhler in Guksch, Hofmann, and Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten* p. 16; K. Bard, 'The Emergence of the Egyptian State', in I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 70–1; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 58; A. Radwan, 'Ein Jenseitsboot der 1. Dynastie aus Abusir—Teil 1', in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, p. 559–71; J. Lindemann, 'Ein Jenseitsboot der 1. Dynastie aus Abusir—Teil 2', ibid., pp. 573–80; Wilkinson, *MDAIK* 52 (1996), pp. 352–3.

[149] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 52–3; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 185–94.

[150] H. Altenmüller, 'Funerary Boats and Boat Graves of the Old Kingdom', *Archiv Orientální* 70 (2003), pp. 269–72; M. Verner, 'Funerary Boats of Neferirkare and Raneferef', in E. Luft (ed.), *The Intellectual Heritage of Egypt: Studies Presented to László Kákosy by Friends and Colleagues on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday* (Budapest, 1992), pp. 587–602, with list on pp. 595–9.

[151] Ibid., p. 598.

[152] See e.g. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, pp. 118–19.

these vessels.[153] One holds that they required them to reach the next world, wherever that was, or for travel after their arrival there; another is that they are solar barks and allowed the dead to travel in the sky with the sun god. Some think that they allowed the deceased to visit various places of pilgrimage in this world, e.g. Abydos, or were intended for ceremonial usage. According to others, these are boats that were employed during the deceased's funeral. Wengrow, noting the presence of boat burials adjacent to some large mastabas at Saqqara that mimic estates, suggests that in such cases, the vessels may have been intended to fill a domestic or economic purpose in the afterlife.[154]

Unfortunately, we have no evidence to indicate which, if any, of these ideas is correct. Obviously, not all boats need have been buried for the same reason, and in some cases a buried vessel may have been intended to serve more than one function. The boats themselves tell us nothing about Egyptian ideas concerning the location or nature of the next world during the period under survey. If the deceased did have to voyage through the cosmos in order to arrive at their domicile in the hereafter, or the topography of their new home was such that it required a boat to move from one region of it to another, the presence of buried vessels adjacent to tombs and other elements of funerary complexes is, by itself, insufficient to prove this.

2.4. WAS THE NEXT WORLD INHABITED BY SUPERNATURAL BEINGS WITH WHOM THE EGYPTIANS OF THE EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD AND FIRST HALF OF THE OLD KINGDOM HOPED TO INTERACT AND, IF SO, WHICH ONES?

2.4.1. Sokar

There is evidence for belief in a range of different deities during the period under survey.[155] However, only a few of these have any specific connection with the afterlife. In later periods of Egyptian history, the Memphite god Sokar plays an important role in relation to the deceased. He was sometimes syncretized with Osiris, giving rise to the

[153] For surveys of the different views, see T. El-Awady, 'Boat Graves in the Old Kingdom Royal Funerary Complexes', in Z. Hawass, K. Daoud, and S. Abd El-Fatah (eds), *The Realm of the Pharaohs: Essays in Honour of Tohfa Handoussa* 1 (Cairo, 2008), pp. 179–85; Verner in Luft (ed.), *The Intellectual Heritage of Egypt*, pp. 600–2; Radwan in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, pp. 561 and 564–7; Altenmüller, *Archiv Orientální* 70 (2003), pp. 272–3.

[154] Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 244.

[155] See Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 261–320, with list of divinities on pp. 279–98; B. Begelsbacher-Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches im Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV. und V. Dynastie* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1981).

composite deity Sokar-Osiris or Osiris-Sokar.[156] But there is no evidence to associate him specifically with the dead in our period.[157] It is not until the sixth dynasty that the deceased can be described as *ỉmꜣḫ ḫr Skr*, 'revered in the presence of Sokar'.[158] Being *imakh* in the presence of a god ensured that the deity in question would look after one and supply one's needs in the next world.[159] Sokar does not appear as a donor in offering formulas until the Middle Kingdom.[160] From the fourth dynasty onward, the Sokar Festival is one of a number of feasts, including those of other deities like Thoth and Min, at which the deceased hope to receive invocation offerings.[161] This may already have been celebrated in the first dynasty, but the evidence is equivocal.[162]

2.4.2. Khentiamentiu

As we saw in section 2.3.2, a divinity called Khentiamentiu, 'Foremost of the westerners', is attested on seal impressions from the tombs of the first dynasty rulers Den and Qaa. These clearly associate him with deceased kings. The context, however, does not allow us to determine whether 'Foremost of the westerners' there is a proper name or an epithet. Since Khentiamentiu is written with a recumbent jackal determinative, this could simply be a designation for a jackal god like Anubis. There is no unequivocal evidence for an independent deity of that name until the second half of the fifth dynasty, when he appears as a donor in offering formulas that name him in parallel with gods like Anubis and Osiris, referring to each in a separate clause and thus clearly distinguishing them.[163]

[156] The former is attested as early as the First Intermediate Period. See K. Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis* (Oxford, 2005), p. 15. The latter appears for the first time in the New Kingdom. See E. Brovarski, 'Sokar', in Helck and Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5, p. 1060.

[157] Ibid., p. 1057.

[158] Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis*, p. 37.

[159] See K. Jansen-Winkeln, 'Zur Bedeutung von *jmꜣḫ*', *BSEG* 20 (1996), pp. 29–36; DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, pp. 191–4 and 376; J. Malek, 'The Old Kingdom', in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, p. 103; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 48–9; Allen in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, pp. 12 and 16–17; Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, pp. 215–19; G. Lapp, 'Totentexte der Privatleute vom Ende des Alten Reiches bis zur 1. Zwischenzeit unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Sargkammern und Särgen', *SAK* 43 (2014), pp. 214–15 note 41; C. Eyre, 'Work and the Organisation of Work in the Old Kingdom', in M. Powell (ed.), *Labor in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, 1987), p. 22.

[160] Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis*, p. 37.

[161] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 10. On the Sokar Festival, see A. Forgeau, *Horus-fils-d'Isis: La jeunesse d'un dieu* (Cairo, 2010), pp. 256–8; G. Gaballa and K. Kitchen, 'The Festival of Sokar', *Orientalia* 38 (1969), pp. 1–76; C. Graindorge-Héreil, *Le dieu Sokar à Thèbes au Nouvel Empire* (Wiesbaden, 1994); M. Verner, *Sons of the Sun: Rise and Decline of the Fifth Dynasty* (Prague, 2014), pp. 145–7.

[162] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 296 and 301–2; Gaballa and Kitchen, *Orientalia* 38 (1969), pp. 13–19; Graindorge-Héreil, *Le dieu Sokar à Thèbes au Nouvel Empire* 1, p. 57.

[163] See, for example, T.G.H. James (ed.), *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae Etc.* 1² (London, 1961), plate 17 (upper); A. Mariette, *Les mastabas de l'Ancien Empire* (Paris, 1889), p. 230; Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis*, pp. 30–1.

The seal used to make the impressions found in the tomb of Den has been reconstructed in two different ways. According to Dreyer's initial publication, it incorporated nine vertical rows. These contained the following names or epithets (reading from left to right): Khentiamentiu, Horus Narmeher, Khentiamentiu, Horus Aha, Khentiamentiu, Horus Djer, Horus Djet, Horus Den, and the king's mother Meretneith.[164] The name or epithet in each row is written twice, except for the fourth row, where it appears three times. The first, third, and fifth rows have to be read from bottom to top, the other six in the normal way.

Narmeher was the last of the proto-kings of dynasty 0. He is thought to have been buried in Tomb B 17/18 in Cemetery B at Abydos.[165] Aha, Djer, Djet, and Den were the first four rulers of the first dynasty. Meretneith was a queen who is thought to have acted as a regent for her son Den. With the exception of Aha, whose tomb is in Cemetery B, all were buried at Umm el-Qaab. Thus the seal gives us a sequence of five kings and a regent with tombs at Abydos. It has been suggested that Meretneith is named after rather than before Den because of her lower status, her reign being reckoned as part of that of her son and successor.[166]

Dreyer has argued that Khentiamentiu on this seal was used as a substitute for the names of kings who were also buried at Abydos but who no longer had an active funerary cult there. Thus they were expected to partake of the offerings presented to the god instead. According to him, the first Khentiamentiu refers to the proto-kings Iri-Hor and Ka/Sekhen who preceded Narmeher, the second to the proto-king Scorpion, whom he conjectures to have succeeded that ruler, and the third to Athothis I, a shadowy figure only attested in Ramesside king lists, to whom he assigns a position between Aha and Djer.[167]

Kaiser has expressed doubts about Dreyer's interpretation of the seal.[168] He thinks that its present form represents a reworking of an earlier version. He postulates that the original was produced during the reign of Den. Like the later version, this incorporated nine vertical rows. It contained the following names or epithets (again reading from left to right): Khentiamentiu, Horus Narmeher, Khentiamentiu, Horus Aha, Khentiamentiu, Horus Djer, Khentiamentiu, Horus Djet, and the king's mother Meretneith.[169] Thus, in Kaiser's hypothetical original version, Khentiamentiu stood before every name on the seal except that of the queen. After Den's death, he thinks, the seal was reworked to insert that king's name between those of Djet and Meretneith, but this necessitated the deletion of the row containing Khentiamentiu before that with Djet's name, in order to provide the required space. According to Kaiser, the seal had an administrative function, and the multiple occurrences of the name of Khentiamentiu, the patron god of the necropolis, on it provided evidence of its official character.[170] However, he also

[164] See Dreyer, *MDAIK* 43 (1987), p. 36, Abb. 3.
[165] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, p. 21.
[166] Dreyer, *MDAIK* 43 (1987), p. 37 note 15.
[167] Ibid., pp. 37–43.
[168] Kaiser, *MDAIK* 43 (1987), pp. 115–19.
[169] Ibid., p. 118, Abb. 2.
[170] Ibid., p. 115. Stadelmann in Daoud, Bedier, and Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2, pp. 361–2, also regards this as the official seal of the necropolis.

considers the possibility that the repeated juxtaposition of the divine name or epithet with a royal name on the seal may reflect belief in a relationship between the two parties in the afterlife, one in which only a king could participate. This would account for the absence of Khentiamentiu before the name of Meretneith.[171]

The seal used to make the impressions found in the tomb of Qaa incorporated nine vertical rows as well. These contained the following names or epithets, reading from left to right: Khentiamentiu, Horus Qaa, Horus Semeherkhet, Horus Anedjib, Horus Den, Horus Djet, Horus Djer, Horus Aha, and Horus Narmeher.[172] The name or epithet in each row is written twice. The first row has to be read from bottom to top, the rest in the normal way. The seal lists all the kings of the first dynasty in reverse chronological order, followed by the last proto-king of dynasty 0, Narmeher, all of whom were buried at Abydos. According to Dreyer, Khentiamentiu probably figures here as guardian deity of the necropolis.[173]

Dreyer's interpretation of the seal impressions from the tomb of Den is problematic. Why should the name or epithet Khentiamentiu replace the names of two kings in one instance and only one in the others? A further problem is the paucity of evidence that Scorpion and Athothis I were actually buried at Abydos. Kaiser's suggestion that the alternation of Khentiamentiu with royal names on the seal may reflect belief in some sort of relationship between that god and the kings in question in the afterlife is certainly possible, but what sort of relationship this may have been we cannot say. Comparison with other seals of the same period suggests that it may have been one of subordination, in which the kings benefited from the deity's patronage or protection.[174]

It is conceivable that Khentiamentiu was omitted before the name of Meretneith for lack of space rather than because she was not entitled to participate in such a relationship. This is evidently why it was omitted before the names of Djet and Den in what Kaiser postulates is the later form of the seal. Its maker probably stopped inserting rows containing Khentiamentiu when he realized that this would leave insufficient space for the remaining names he wished to add. The seal impressions from the tomb of Qaa, where Khentiamentiu only appears once, suggest that provided this element was incorporated somewhere in the seal design, the precise number of times it occurred was unimportant.

[171] Kaiser, *MDAIK* 43 (1987), p. 118 note 13.

[172] G. Dreyer, E.-M. Engel, U. Hartung, T. Hikade, E. Köhler, and F. Pumpenmeier, 'Umm el-Qaab: Nachuntersuchungen im frühzeitlichen Königsfriedhof, 7./8. Vorbericht', *MDAIK* 52 (1996), p. 72, Abb. 26; Dreyer in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, pp. 62–3.

[173] See Dreyer, Engel, Hartung, Hikade, Köhler, and Pumpenmeier, *MDAIK* 52 (1996), p. 73.

[174] Compare e.g. P. Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 3 (Wiesbaden, 1963), plates 73–4, Abb. 276A, 276B, and 277, in which the name of the ruler alternates with the name and titles of an official. The design of the seal depicted in Abb. 277, where the king's name is only repeated before the first three titles, provides a good parallel for the seal impressions from the tomb of Den and actually dates to the same reign.

Some have proposed a different interpretation for Khentiamentiu on the seal impressions from the tomb of Den. They think it is a title inserted before the name of the king, analogous to the *Wsir*, 'Osiris', that is written before royal names in certain contexts from the Pyramid Texts onward. Thus, Khentiamentiu NN is the counterpart or forerunner of the later locution *Wsir* NN.[175] But this view is problematic for a number of reasons. First, it assumes that the names and epithets on the seal impressions are arranged in two horizontal rows rather than nine vertical ones. Thus one reads across: Khentiamentiu Horus Narmeher, Khentiamentiu Horus Aha, and so on. This ignores the fact that the rows with Khentiamentiu can only be read vertically from bottom to top. Otherwise, the signs are out of sequence. In effect, what one has is Khentiamentiu, Khentiamentiu, Horus Narmeher, Horus Narmeher, and so on. Thus there is no real correspondence with the later *Wsir* NN.

Furthermore, reading across is impossible when it comes to the third and fourth rows. Khentiamentiu is written twice in the former, but Horus Aha is written three times in the latter. If one tries to read horizontally, then one instance of Horus Aha will have no Khentiamentiu before it. The final problem is that not every king has Khentiamentiu before his name. Even if one accepts Kaiser's hypothesis that originally fewer kings were named on the seal and each had this element in front of it, the fact that the object was reworked and Khentiamentiu was omitted or removed before the names of two kings indicates that its presence was not deemed to be essential before the name of every ruler. The seal impressions from Qaa's tomb, where Khentiamentiu only occurs in the initial row, confirm this. If this name or epithet really were being used in the same way as the later designation *Wsir*, one would expect to find it before the name of every king on the seals where it appears.

Thus far we have considered only cases where Khentiamentiu is written phonetically, and is thus easily recognizable. In a number of sources from the period under survey, however, a divine name or epithet written only with the hieroglyph depicting a recumbent jackal occurs. Some read this as Khentiamentiu, others as *'Inpw*, 'Anubis'.[176] According to one view, all instances of the sign in question in texts prior to the sixth dynasty should be read as Khentiamentiu.[177] If so, then the number of occurrences of this name or epithet from our period is significantly increased. But as we will see in the following section, there are good grounds for preferring the alternative reading *'Inpw* in at least some of these examples.

[175] DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, p. 39; G. Scandone-Matthiae, 'Khentiamenti-Horus: The Dead King during the Early Dynastic Period of Egypt', *Journal of Prehistoric Religion* 6 (1992), pp. 31–6; J. Cervelló-Autuori, 'Narmer, Menes and the Seals from Abydos', in Z. Hawass (ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century* 2 (Cairo and New York, 2003), p. 170. Cf. H. Goedicke, 'The "Seal of the Necropolis"', *SAK* 20 (1993), pp. 75–7. For the locution in question, see sections 3.10, 4.10, and 6.6.

[176] Kahl, *Frühägyptisches Wörterbuch* 1, pp. 42–3; cf. DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, pp. 37–40 and 75.

[177] A. Saied, 'Chontiamenti oder Anubis', in Hawass (ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century* 2, p. 475.

2.4.3. Anubis

As noted in section 1.3.2, a pair of bone amulets in the form of jackals was discovered on the chest of a child in a tomb dating *c.*3650–3300 BC at Mostagedda. These may have been intended to protect the body, one of the functions of the later jackal god Anubis, the guardian of the mummy and the necropolis.[178] But there is no evidence for belief in Anubis himself at such an early date. Only in the late fifth dynasty do we begin to find phonetic spellings of this deity's name.[179] Prior to that, it is written ideographically with the sign of a recumbent jackal.[180] This makes identifying references to the god in sources of the period under survey difficult. As noted in section 2.4.2, it is not always clear whether the sign in question should be read as *ỉnpw* or in some other manner, e.g. Khentiamentiu.

Sometimes we can be certain of the correct reading, for instance when the recumbent jackal is followed by one of the characteristic epithets of Anubis like *ḫnty sḏ-nṯr*, 'pre-eminent in the god's booth', or *ḫnty tꜣ ḏsr*, 'pre-eminent in the sacred land',[181] or the sign occurs in a title like *wty ỉnpw*, 'embalmer of Anubis', the first element of which identifies the holder as a participant in an activity associated with the god.[182] But the recumbent jackal is not always accompanied by diagnostic features like these. Equally, unlabeled representations of jackal deities may or may not depict Anubis. As shown in section 2.4.2, however, it is not until the second half of the fifth dynasty that we have unequivocal evidence for Khentiamentiu, 'Foremost of the westerners', as a proper name denoting a distinct god and not just an epithet of other deities. So it is entirely possible that in our period, even in cases where the recumbent jackal sign is meant to be read in that way, the reference is still to Anubis.

One context in which Anubis can be identified with certainty is the offering formula, where he appears as a donor as early as the fourth dynasty.[183] In fact, he is the earliest divinity to assume this role. Although his name is invariably written with the recumbent jackal sign alone in formulas of this type, the addition of epithets like those cited in the preceding paragraph leaves no doubt as to how it should be read. The epithets in question foreground his roles as god of embalming and the cemetery. *ḫnty tꜣ ḏsr*, 'pre-eminent in the sacred land', is attested as early as the third dynasty, in both royal and non-royal contexts.[184] In offering formulas of the period under survey, Anubis is asked to supply the material needs of the deceased, ensuring that a steady supply of offerings reaches them, but he also provides for their burial and helps them to reach the west and

[178] D. Patch, 'From Land to Landscape', in D. Patch (ed.), *Dawn of Egyptian Art* (New Haven and London, 2011), p. 50.
[179] DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, pp. 35–6 and 75.
[180] Kahl, *Frühägyptisches Wörterbuch* 1, pp. 42–3.
[181] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 8; DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, pp. 152–7.
[182] See section 2.1.1.
[183] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 5–8.
[184] DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, pp. 43, 102, and 221.

enjoy the status of *imakh*, 'revered one', in the presence of the great god. Starting in the fifth dynasty, dead people are described as or express the wish to be *imakh* in the presence of Anubis as well.[185]

2.4.4. Re

The earliest unequivocal and securely dated evidence for belief in the sun god Re occurs in the third dynasty, although some have tried to trace this back even earlier.[186] According to one view, the bark of the solar deity is depicted above two rows of beheaded prisoners on the obverse of the Narmeher palette.[187] The same identification has been proposed for a bark supported by a pair of outstretched wings shown on an ivory comb from the tomb of the first dynasty ruler Djet.[188] But it is not clear why these vessels must be solar ones. In any case, they have no apparent connection with the afterlife. Bárta says that a falcon shown sailing in the bark on the ivory comb is the deceased king, but cites no evidence in support of this identification.[189] Others have identified it as the sun god himself.[190] The only explicit evidence for belief in any form of interaction between Re and the deceased during the period under survey comes from offering formulas of the fifth dynasty, where the deceased hope to be *imakh* in his presence.[191]

According to one theory, the fourth dynasty ruler Khufu went so far as to identify himself with Re.[192] However, this seems to be based on no evidence apart from the fact that the name of his pyramid at Giza was *ꜣḫ.t-Ḫw=f-wi*, 'Horizon of Khufu', and that his son and successor Djedefre was the first to adopt the title 'son of Re'. But the noun *ꜣḫ.t* does not have exclusively solar connotations. Rather it denotes any liminal zone at the interface of two spheres of existence. The place where the sun rises, the boundary between the visible and the hidden, would have provided a very obvious example of such a zone to the ancient Egyptians, but it was by no means the only one known to them.[193] Temples, tombs, and cemeteries could be horizons as well.[194] The fact that the solar temple of the fifth dynasty king Menkauhor was called *ꜣḫ.t-Rʿ*, 'Horizon of Re',

[185] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 19; DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, pp. 191–2.
[186] See section 1.4.3.
[187] D. O'Connor, 'The Narmer Palette: A New Interpretation', in E. Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization* (Chicago, 2011), p. 152.
[188] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 293; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 66–7.
[189] Ibid., p. 66. [190] e.g. Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 293.
[191] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 17; Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, p. 52 note 80.
[192] R. Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden: Vom Ziegelbau zum Weltwunder* (Mainz am Rhein, 1985), p. 126; Stadelmann in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 112; Z. Hawass, 'The Programs of the Royal Funerary Complexes of the Fourth Dynasty', in D. O'Connor and D. Silverman (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne, 1995), p. 227; El-Awady in Hawass, Daoud, and Abd El-Fatah (eds), *The Realm of the Pharaohs*, p. 181; Nuzzolo in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 212.
[193] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 4. [194] *Wb*. 1, 17, 19–22.

illustrates the point.[195] If the word 'horizon' was associated exclusively with the sun god, there would have been no need to add the qualifier 'of Re' to it. So the name of Khufu's pyramid is a weak basis on which to rest a theory that he identified himself with the sun god.

While it is true that Djedefre was the first to adopt the title 'son of Re', he was followed in this by subsequent kings who were not descendants of Khufu, down to and including the Roman emperors who ruled Egypt thousands of years later. His adoption of this title reflects the growing importance of the solar cult during the fourth dynasty, as does the number of its kings whose names incorporated that of Re, but it hardly constitutes proof that he thought his father Khufu was the sun god.

A further sign of the growing importance of the solar cult during the period of our survey is the erection of sun temples by rulers of the fifth dynasty.[196] Six kings are known to have built such temples: Userkaf, Sahure, Neferirkare, Reneferef, Niuserre, and Menkauhor. But the remains of only two have been identified to date, that of Userkaf at Abusir and that of Niuserre at Abu Ghurab.[197] The purpose of such temples is not fully understood.[198] One theory regards them as ritual arenas for the celebration of the sun god Re's renewal. According to this view, the deity died and was reborn each day, and the sun temple fulfilled the same function for him as the pyramid temple did for the deceased king.[199] Just as the decorative programme of the pyramid temple depicted the ruler performing his royal duties as in life, so too that of the sun temple displayed the solar deity's power and the benefits that it conferred in this world. The two major themes illustrated are the orderly progression of the seasons, each with its characteristic activities, and the periodic renewal of the king's strength and authority through the *sed*-festival, both of which were effected by Re.[200]

It has been suggested that the rites performed in sun temples also benefited the kings who built them after they died.[201] If so, this would be clear evidence of a posthumous link between them and the solar deity. But there is no real proof that this was the case, since the decoration of solar temples never refers to deceased kings. The Abusir papyrus archives show that offerings were brought regularly from the sun temple erected by Neferirkare to his mortuary temple.[202] But this only demonstrates that an

[195] M. Verner, *The Pyramids: Their Archaeology and History* (London, 2002), pp. 271–2; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 218–19.

[196] See ibid., pp. 199–226; J. Janák, H. Vymazalová, and F. Coppens, 'The Fifth Dynasty "Sun Temples" in a Broader Context', in M. Bárta, F. Coppens, and J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2010/1* (Prague, 2011), pp. 430–42.

[197] See list of sun temples ibid., p. 431.

[198] For a survey of the various interpretations of their function that have been proposed, see Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 219–25.

[199] Janák, Vymazalová, and Coppens in Bárta, Coppens, and Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2010/1*, pp. 433–4 and 441.

[200] Ibid., pp. 434–5. [201] Ibid., p. 442.

[202] Ibid., p. 436. Cf. H. Vyzamalová, 'The Economic Connection Between the Royal Cult in the Pyramid Temples and the Sun Temples in Abusir', in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 296–7; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 209–10.

economic relationship existed between the two institutions, which is hardly surprising since both were ultimately subject to royal authority and part of the same redistribution system. It tells us nothing about how the Egyptians perceived the relationship of the king in question with Re in the afterlife, or indeed whether they imagined such a relationship to exist.

2.4.5. The great god

In some offering formulas of the fourth dynasty, the deceased are described as or hope to be *imakh* in the presence of the great god (*nṯr ʿ*). The dead also hope to be mighty and noble in the presence of the great god.[203] Unfortunately, the context does not allow us to say who this deity is. Similar requests occur in offering formulas of the fifth dynasty. The great god appears as one of the donors in offering formulas of this time as well.[204] Other male deities in whose presence the deceased desire to be *imakh* in fifth dynasty offering formulas include Anubis, Re, Ptah, and (from the middle of the fifth dynasty onward) Osiris.[205] In theory, the epithet 'great god' could refer to any of these divinities, or even the king, in whose presence the deceased sometimes express the wish to be *imakh*.[206] One view is that it refers to 'the figure who carried out the functions of king among and for the dead, an amalgam of all dead kings continuing to function for their contemporaries'.[207] But the identity of this deity remains obscure.[208] Only later, in the sixth dynasty, in cases where 'great god' is itself qualified by further epithets, e.g. 'lord of the sky', or where the wish is expressed that the deceased might ascend to the great god, thus indicating that the deity involved inhabits a celestial region, can we obtain a more precise idea of his nature.[209] But the epithet itself need not refer to the same divinity in every instance, so one cannot generalize from examples like these.

2.4.6. Other deities

Finally, a number of kings are shown interacting with deities in their funerary complexes. Some of these representations are three-dimensional, for example, the famous seated statue of Khafre protected by a falcon god found in his valley temple at Giza, or

[203] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 10–11.
[204] Ibid., pp. 15 and 17. [205] Ibid., pp. 17 and 19. [206] Ibid., pp. 11 and 17.
[207] Eyre in Powell (ed.), *Labor in the Ancient Near East*, p. 22.
[208] On the problem of the identity of the great god in the Old Kingdom, see Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 46–52; DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, pp. 168–9 and 180–1; Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis*, p. 86; Allen in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, pp. 11–12; O. Berlev, 'Two Kings—Two Suns: On the Worldview of the Ancient Egyptians', in S. Quirke (ed.), *Discovering Egypt from the Neva: The Egyptological Legacy of Oleg D. Berlev* (Berlin, 2003), pp. 19–35.
[209] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 32–3; Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 47–9; Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, p. 70.

the equally well-known triads from the valley temple of Menkaure at the same site showing him flanked by Hathor and a series of goddesses representing different nomes.[210] But there are also many reliefs depicting kings in the presence of divinities, the earliest dating to the reign of Djoser in the third dynasty.[211]

Little of this decoration relates specifically to the afterlife. Rather the king is shown carrying out the same duties, political, social, and cultic, that he performed when alive, only in an idealized manner.[212] In this respect, the scenes are analogous to those from private tombs of the same period showing the tomb owner carrying out his official duties or engaged in other activities characteristic of this world. The difference is that the living king's responsibilities, unlike those of his subjects, brought him into contact with the divine sphere, and this is reflected in the decoration of the royal funerary monument. According to one view, scenes like those showing the king overcoming the forces of chaos or performing other beneficial acts in the presence of divinities allowed him to contribute to the maintenance of order in this world even after his death.[213]

Representations of deities in royal funerary complexes occur mainly in mortuary temples during the period under survey, more rarely in valley temples, causeways, or the substructures of pyramids. They are concentrated in the front parts of that building.[214] With one exception, the mortuary temple of Sahure at Abusir,[215] no deities appear in the innermost room, the place where the deceased king was shown seated before an offering table and where the offering list was inscribed.[216] This corresponds to the chapel with the false door in contemporary private tombs. The near-total absence of divinities here forms a striking contrast with their prominence elsewhere in the mortuary temple.

It is not clear when the various components of the royal funerary complex actually began to function. The offering rites depicted in the innermost rooms of the mortuary temple did not commence until after the king's death, but other parts of the complex may already have been in operation earlier.[217] It is possible, for instance, that the statue of Khafre described above may already have been the object of a cult while the king was still alive. Nor is it certain that all the statues found in royal funerary complexes were originally designed to be set up there. It has been conjectured that the triads discovered

[210] For statues found in royal funerary complexes of the period under survey, see Stockfisch, *Untersuchungen zum Totenkult des ägyptischen Königs im Alten Reich* 2, pp. 15–41.

[211] See ibid., catalogue nos. 3.2.1–5.6.22. For the deities with whom the kings interact, see D. Stockfisch, *Untersuchungen zum Totenkult des ägyptischen Königs im Alten Reich* 1 (Hamburg, 2003), pp. 327–52 and 410–11.

[212] Ibid., pp. 392–3. Cf. Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 185–92.

[213] Stockfisch, *Untersuchungen zum Totenkult des ägyptischen Königs im Alten Reich* 1, pp. 397–8 and 400.

[214] Ibid., pp. 398–9 and 403–5. For details of the specific locations of such representations, see first reference cited in note 211.

[215] Stockfisch, *Untersuchungen zum Totenkult des ägyptischen Königs im Alten Reich* 2, catalogue no. 5.2.13.

[216] Stockfisch, *Untersuchungen zum Totenkult des ägyptischen Königs im Alten Reich* 1, pp. 134–5, 282, and 395–6.

[217] Ibid., pp. 393 and 399.

in the valley temple of Menkaure may have been brought there from a temple dedicated to Hathor.[218] As with the reliefs, there is little about the statuary that relates specifically to the afterlife.

2.5. WERE THERE ANY PREREQUISITES (E.G. GOOD CONDUCT IN THIS WORLD) FOR ENGAGING IN INTERACTION WITH DEITIES IN THE AFTERLIFE?

If so, it is difficult to document this from the evidence available at present. From the fourth dynasty onward, autobiographical inscriptions in tombs contain assertions that the tomb owner is innocent of any wrongdoing.[219] Occasionally the tomb owner adds that he refrained from evil 'because I wished that it might go well with me in the presence of the great god' or 'because I wished to be *imakh* in the presence of the great god for ever'.[220] As we have seen, attaining the status of *imakh* before the great god was one of the chief goals of the deceased, and statements like the last one certainly imply that its achievement was dependent on one's conduct while alive. But such explicit references to the motivation for the deceased's conduct do not appear until the sixth dynasty, after the end of the period under survey, so one should be cautious about assuming that this was the case in our period as well.

In tomb inscriptions of the fourth dynasty and later, the tomb owner sometimes threatens anyone who might defile the sepulchre with litigation. Some threats specify that the case will be heard by the great god.[221] The venue for this legal process is 'the place where litigation is conducted' or, in some inscriptions of the sixth dynasty, 'the tribunal of the great god'.[222] Thus the great god is clearly seen as an arbiter of right and wrong, and in some texts he is actually called 'lord of judgement'.[223] Although the tomb defiler is potentially subject to divine punishment in these circumstances, our sources do not specify whether such retribution would be inflicted in this world or the next. Furthermore, the legal process involved only investigates one particular allegation of wrongdoing; there is no assessment of the defendant's conduct as a whole.[224] To what extent a verdict of guilty in this instance would have compromised his fate in the afterlife we cannot say.

[218] Ibid., p. 391.

[219] N. Kloth, *Die (auto-) biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches: Untersuchungen zu Phraseologie und Entwicklung* (Hamburg, 2002), pp. 88–107.

[220] Ibid., pp. 108–11.

[221] E. Edel, 'Untersuchungen zur Phraseologie der ägyptischen Inschriften des Alten Reiches', *MDAIK* 13 (1944), pp. 9–11; S. Morschauser, *Threat-Formulae in Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore, 1991), pp. 73–6.

[222] Edel, *MDAIK* 13 (1944), pp. 11–12; Morschauser, *Threat-Formulae in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 73–6.

[223] See e.g. K. Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs* (Leipzig, 1933), p. 71, line 1; Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 19.

[224] E. Otto, *Egyptian Art and the Cults of Osiris and Amon* (London, 1968), p. 36.

One fifth dynasty source may provide an indication of belief in a general assessment of the deceased's character in the hereafter. However, this too is slightly later than the period under survey since it already mentions Osiris. A frequently expressed wish in offering formulas of the fifth dynasty is that the deceased might travel upon the beautiful ways on which the *imakhu* travel.[225] But in one particular example inscribed on a door lintel from the tomb of Werirenptah, a priest attached to the solar temple of Neferirkare who was buried at Saqqara, this is expanded slightly. There the wish is expressed that Osiris might permit the tomb owner to travel upon the beautiful roads on which the *imakhu* and the righteous (*mꜣʿ-ḫrw*) travel and dwell in peace in the presence of the great god.[226] In texts of later periods, the deceased only attain the status of *mꜣʿ-ḫrw* after they have been judged before Osiris and found to have led a virtuous life. As a result they are admitted into the following of that god. Did the concept of a general judgement of the dead already exist at this time? If so, this is the earliest evidence for it. What form the judgement might have taken and by whom it might have been conducted are unknown. It is striking, nevertheless, that the righteous are mentioned in parallel with the *imakhu* in Werirenptah's inscription, and that both hope to enjoy proximity to the great god. As we have seen, some texts of sixth dynasty date clearly imply that virtuous conduct during one's lifetime was a prerequisite for attaining the status of *imakh*, so perhaps the same was already true for that of *mꜣʿ-ḫrw* in the fifth dynasty.

2.6. BY WHAT MEANS, RITUAL OR OTHERWISE, DID THE EGYPTIANS OF THE EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD AND THE FIRST PART OF THE OLD KINGDOM SEEK TO ENSURE THEIR TRANSITION FROM THIS LIFE TO THE NEXT?

2.6.1. The Ritual of Opening the Mouth and glorification spells

A number of rites used for this purpose in later periods are already attested during the one under survey. The Ritual of Opening of the Mouth, which was supposed to reanimate the deceased, is mentioned in scenes from the early fourth dynasty tomb of Metjen at Saqqara (reign of Snefru).[227] Model sets of implements used in this ritual are known from the fifth dynasty,[228] and actual specimens of some of these objects like

[225] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 17.

[226] E.A.W. Budge (ed.), *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae &c., in the British Museum* 6 (London, 1922), plate 1; James (ed.), *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae Etc.*1², plate 29.

[227] Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* 2, plates 4–5. Cf. Wilson, *JNES* 3 (1944), p. 214.

[228] See R. Van Walsem, 'The *PSŠ-KF*: An Investigation of an Ancient Egyptian Funerary Instrument', *OMRO* 59 (1978–9), pp. 224–5.

the *psš-kf* even earlier.[229] The rite of glorification (*sꜣḫ*), designed to transform the deceased into an *ꜣḫ* or glorified spirit, is also mentioned in the scenes from the tomb of Metjen, where priests are shown glorifying the tomb owner, censing, and presenting offerings to him.[230] In later periods of Egyptian history, glorification spells were recited in two different contexts: offering and embalming rites.[231] Only the former are actually depicted during the period under survey.

2.6.2. Rites on the roof of the tomb

In addition to rites of this type, the functions of which are well known, other rites are depicted in sources from our period which have no later analogues. This makes it more difficult to ascertain their purpose. It is not clear, in such cases, whether the rituals are designed to ensure the deceased's transition from this world to the next, sustain or assist them in some manner after their arrival there, or do both. One such rite is depicted in the tomb of Debehen at Giza, which dates to the fourth or the fifth dynasty. It appears to have taken place on the roof of the mastaba, which was accessed by means of a ramp, and involved the presentation of offerings to a standing statue of the tomb owner in a shrine, accompanied by recitations, singing and dancing.[232] Above a man who is shown reciting from a scroll is the caption: 'Presenting offerings, feeding the glorified spirit, and glorifying by the embalmer'. Another caption records the words of the singers: 'His flesh is complete', which could be part of a spell intended to restore the deceased to life.[233] Presentation of offerings on the roof is also mentioned in an inscription from the fifth dynasty tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep at Saqqara,[234] as well as in some tombs of the sixth dynasty.[235] Some speculate that the purpose of this rite may have been to allow the tomb owner to ascend to the sky,[236] but this may be an anachronism.[237]

One assumes that rites were performed and spells recited during the preparation of the body for burial, whether this actually involved mummification or not. According to

[229] Ibid., pp. 227–30.
[230] Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* 2, plates 4–5. Cf. Wilson, *JNES* 3 (1944), p. 214.
[231] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 12.
[232] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 75 and 77; Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* 2, plate 35; S. Hassan, *Excavations at Gîza* 4 (Cairo, 1943), p. 176 figure 122 and plate 50; Wilson, *JNES* 3 (1944), p. 213 and plate 18; N. Alexanian, 'Himmelstreppen und Himmelsaufstieg: Zur Interpretation von Ritualen auf Grabdächern im Alten Reich', in Guksch, Hofmann, and Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten*, p. 27, Abb. 1.
[233] Wilson, *JNES* 3 (1944), p. 212.
[234] A. Moussa and H. Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep* (Mainz am Rhein, 1977), p. 51 and plate 11. Cf. Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, p. 101.
[235] Wilson, *JNES* 3 (1944), pp. 208 and 213.
[236] e.g. Alexanian in Guksch, Hofmann, and Bommas (eds), *Grab und Totenkult im alten Ägypten*, pp. 27–40; Theis, *Deine Seele zum Himmel, dein Leichnam zur Erde*, pp. 160–3.
[237] See section 2.3.3.2.

inscriptions in the mastaba of the fourth dynasty queen Mersiankh III at Giza, she spent 273 or 274 days in the embalming place before being laid to rest in her tomb.[238] This span of time would certainly have allowed scope for ritual activity, but the details of any rites performed during her embalmment are unknown to us.

2.6.3. The funeral

Depictions of funerals occur in several Old Kingdom tombs, although all but a few of these are later than the period under survey.[239] The scenes from those that do fall within our purview are mostly concerned with practical details, e.g. the transport of the deceased's body or statue from one place to another. Such activities could have a ritual component, however. A relief from the fifth dynasty tomb of Hetepherakhti depicts a boat conveying a statue of the deceased.[240] One of those on board is a lector priest, who is described as 'conducting the ritual' during the voyage, but no details of the nature of this rite are provided. In the stern of the vessel sits a woman who is identified as the *ḏr.t*, 'kite'. In later periods of Egyptian history women so designated recited lamentations that helped to revivify the deceased. This may have been the function of the woman shown here, but we cannot be certain. She is not portrayed in the act of mourning.[241] That act is depicted in some Old Kingdom representations of funerals,[242] but whether it was supposed to help reawaken the dead, like the laments of the *ḏr.t* in later times, is unknown. Apart from the rites on the roof of the tomb, to which reference has been made in section 2.6.2, the only other major ritual event that representations of funerals from our period depict is the so-called voyage to Sais.[243] This took place on the day of the burial itself. What role, if any, it played in effecting the deceased's transition from this life to the next is, again, uncertain.[244]

[238] D. Dunham and W. Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III* (Boston, 1974), p. 8 and fig. 2.

[239] For descriptions of Old Kingdom funerals, see Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 70–80; Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, pp. 95–105; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 242–9; and Wilson, *JNES* 3 (1944), pp. 201–18. Theis, *Deine Seele zum Himmel, dein Leichnam zur Erde*, pp. 203–6, and Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, pp. 96–8, give complete lists of depictions of these in chronological order. Only nos. 1–3 in the latter's list are from our period.

[240] Wilson, *JNES* 3 (1944), p. 207 and plate 17.

[241] Cf. Wilson, *JNES* 3 (1944), p. 207 and plate 17. According to A. Kucharek, 'Totenklage und Osirisklage zwischen Negierung und Transzendenz', in M. Jacques (ed.), *Klagetraditionen: Form und Funktion der Klage in den Kulturen der Antike* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 2011), p. 23, the function of the *ḏr.t* in the Old Kingdom was that of protector and provider of offerings rather than mourner.

[242] See L. Kinney, 'Butcher Queens of the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties: Their Association with the Acacia House and the Role of Butchers as Ritual Performers', in Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'*, pp. 255–6.

[243] See Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, p. 99.

[244] On this rite, see Theis, *Deine Seele zum Himmel, dein Leichnam zur Erde*, pp. 69–74 and 123–7, with references to earlier literature. On pp. 23–4, he cites an ivory plaque from the tomb of Aha as the earliest representation of the voyage to Sais. The scene on the plaque does include a bark (see ibid., p. 311, Abb. 38), but there is no indication that this is going to Sais or that the context is funerary.

2.6.4. Architectural features of tombs as catalysts for resurrection?

2.6.4.1. The pyramid as primeval mound?

Some believe that the form of the tomb itself was supposed to play a role in restoring its occupant to new life. We have already considered two modern views concerning the pyramid form and its significance. According to one, the pyramid is a stairway to the sky. According to the other, it is a stylized representation of the rays of the sun. A third modern view is that the pyramid represents the primeval mound, the first land to rise from the waters of the ocean that covered everything at the beginning of creation. Proponents of this idea maintain that, since the Egyptians regarded the mound as the source of all life, they credited the pyramid, its symbol, with powers of growth and regeneration that guaranteed the resurrection of the one buried inside it.[245]

However, Quack has shown that there is no ancient evidence to support this view.[246] First of all, the concept of the primeval mound as a landmass that rose from the waters is not attested until long after the pyramid form had ceased to be used for tombs on a regular basis.[247] Moreover, Pyramid Text Spell 600, which is often cited as evidence for an Egyptian conception of the pyramid as a primeval mound, does not actually link the two, and the spell is used subsequently in a range of other contexts that have nothing to do with pyramids.[248] In Egyptian creation accounts, it is what happens on top of the primeval mound that is important, since it is the platform on which the creator god stands when bringing the world into being. Nothing ever happens inside or below the mound. Nor does any Egyptian text ever refer to burial inside or below the primeval mound.[249] There is a separate Egyptian word for a mound in which the dead are interred, *i.t*, and in fact the priests who performed the funerary cult for the fifth dynasty ruler Reneferef referred to his truncated pyramid with precisely this term, and not that denoting the primeval mound.[250]

The Egyptian evidence from the Old Kingdom pertaining to the function of pyramids points in a very different direction to the views that we have considered so far. Only four Pyramid Text spells (534, 599, 600, and 601) actually mention pyramids, and these only occur in the pyramids of three sixth dynasty kings, Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II.[251] What they tell us is that (1) the pyramid and its complex are a unit and

[245] See e.g. Verner, *Abusir IX*, p. 173; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 97 and 104; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 35; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 256 and 258; Allen in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 24.

[246] Quack, *Sokar* 23 (2011), pp. 44 and 48.

[247] Ibid., p. 48. Cf. S. Bickel, *La cosmogonie égyptienne avant le Nouvel Empire* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1994), pp. 68–70.

[248] Quack, *Sokar* 23 (2011), p. 44. For the spell in question, see Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 372–7.

[249] Quack, *Sokar* 23 (2011), p. 48.

[250] Verner, *Abusir IX*, p. 172; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, p. 170.

[251] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 214–19 and 369–84. The pyramid of Pepi I only has Spells 534, 599, and 601. The other two have Spells 599–601, omitting 534.

cannot be separated; (2) this unit belongs to the king and no one else; (3) the king, his name, his pyramid, and his pyramid complex are all linked together; and (4) just as one endures, so should all the others endure.[252] These spells indicate that, in addition to being a place of burial, the pyramid and its complex are an extension of the king's identity, like his name. They map his personality on the landscape, and are designed to be a concrete symbol of his enduring presence wherever they could be seen.[253]

This interpretation is corroborated by other Old Kingdom evidence, in particular, the names of pyramids and their complexes.[254] Typical examples include 'The manifestation of Sahure appears', 'Pure are the places of Userkaf', and 'Enduring are the places of Niuserre'. Most pyramid names stress the notions of appearing, being manifest, enduring, living, being great, divine, pure, beautiful, high, or flourishing. In other words, most of them refer to visible or perceptible characteristics. Another striking thing about these names is that, although they designate structures, they incorporate the name of the king and some make statements about him, e.g. 'Snefru endures' or 'Khafre is great', rather than about the monument itself. In a sense, the king is his pyramid and vice versa.[255] In an inscription in the sixth dynasty tomb of Djau at Abydos, the names of the pyramids of Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II actually replace the names of the kings themselves in the titularies of two of his sisters who became queens.[256]

According to the evidence available at present, the pyramid of the Old Kingdom was both a resting place for the deceased and a means of preserving memory and identity. In this respect, it was not unlike the tombs of non-royal individuals, which had the same two functions. The major difference was that the royal pyramid was constructed on a much grander scale, and thus marked the ruler's superior social status and wealth. The Egyptians of later periods viewed the pyramids in this way as well.[257] As far as one can judge, the pyramid form itself did not confer any particular benefit upon its occupant in the hereafter. Its meaning related to this life as much as it did to the next. This probably explains why it could be abandoned for another design without any fear of untoward consequences, as it was by the fourth dynasty ruler Shepseskaf, who built a mastaba for himself rather than a pyramid.

[252] See Quack, *Sokar* 23 (2011), pp. 41–5, for analysis and discussion.

[253] This probably explains why some kings erected pyramids in more than one place, or in different zones of the same site, symbolizing different geographical areas like north and south. Cf. Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 229–31; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 103–4 and 277–8.

[254] For these, see Bennett, *JEA* 55 (1969), pp. 174–6; Helck in Helck and Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5, pp. 4–6; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, pp. 16–17; Quirke, *The Cult of Ra*, pp. 116–17.

[255] Cf. D. Arnold, 'Royal Cult Complexes of the Old and Middle Kingdoms', in B. Shafer (ed.), *Temples of Ancient Egypt* (London and New York, 1997), p. 45.

[256] Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, p. 117, lines 13–17; H. Fischer, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs* (New York, 1977), figure 58 between pp. 56–7.

[257] Quack, *Sokar* 23 (2011), pp. 50–1.

2.6.4.2. Primeval mounds in other tombs?

Even before the rise of pyramids, a number of tombs from our period incorporated mounds or mound-like features. It has been speculated that the tomb of the second dynasty king Khasekhemwi at Umm el-Qaab had a mound as its superstructure.[258] It was once thought that there was a brick-sheathed mound in that ruler's funerary enclosure at north Abydos as well, but this has now been shown to be the edge of a brick-lined basin, perhaps an intrusive later addition.[259] The central chamber of the tomb of Aha in Cemetery B at Abydos (B15) had a convex capping of mud bricks above the roof beams. Some think that this is where the king's body was interred.[260] Surmounting the burial chamber of the tomb of Djet at Umm el-Qaab there are the remains of a retaining wall that may have enclosed a mound of loose sand or other material.[261] Both features would have been entirely subterranean and thus not visible from the surface.

We do not know whether any of the first dynasty royal tombs at Abydos had a superstructure. Some have speculated that they may have been marked by a mound or tumulus above ground.[262] Others have suggested that this mound may have been enclosed by a shrine made of wooden poles and reed mats.[263] A further theory is that the southern part of the tomb was surmounted by a mud brick cult chapel and the northern part by a mound or tumulus.[264] Yet another idea is that the burial place had a stepped superstructure.[265] Equally unclear is whether other royal tombs at Abydos had a feature corresponding to the subterranean retaining wall above the burial chamber in Djet's tomb and, if so, how many.[266]

[258] L. Bestock, 'The First Kings of Egypt: The Abydos Evidence', in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 144; U. Effland, 'Das Gottesgrab: Der Gott Osiris in Umm el-Qaab/Abydos', *Sokar* 16 (2008), p. 7.

[259] See Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 77; A. Dodson and S. Ikram, *The Tomb in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2008), p. 140; O'Connor, *Abydos*, p. 168; L. Bestock, 'The Early Dynastic Funerary Enclosures of Abydos', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 57–8.

[260] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 23–5.

[261] See W.M.F. Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty* 1 (London, 1900), p. 9 and plates 62 and 64; G. Dreyer, 'Zur Rekonstruktion der Oberbauten der Königsgräber der 1. Dynastie in Abydos', *MDAIK* 47 (1991), pp. 96–9; Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, p. 36.

[262] Notably Dreyer, *MDAIK* 47 (1991), pp. 93–104. See also E.-M. Engel, 'The Royal Tombs at Umm el-Qa'ab', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 35; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 99; Spencer, *Early Egypt*, p. 80; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 227 and 233; Wilkinson in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, pp. 1133–4.

[263] Cf. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 76.

[264] O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 154–5; D. O'Connor, 'Pyramid Origins: A New Theory', in E. Ehrenburg (ed.), *Leaving No Stones Unturned: Essays on the Ancient Near East and Egypt in Honor of Donald P. Hansen* (Winona Lake, 2002), pp. 169–82.

[265] Roth, *JARCE* 30 (1993), pp. 43–4 note 40; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 257; Wilkinson in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, p. 1134.

[266] Dreyer, *MDAIK* 47 (1991), pp. 100–1, thinks traces of similar structures can be identified in the tombs of Djer, Den, and Qaa. Cf. Dreyer, Engel, Hartung, Hikade, Köhler, and Pumpenmeier, *MDAIK* 52 (1996), pp. 57 and 59; Engel, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 33.

Subsurface mounds were not restricted to royal burial monuments during the first dynasty. Mastaba S3507 at Saqqara, dating to the reign of Den, had a mound of sand and rubble enclosed by a casing of mud brick over the burial chamber.[267] According to Hendrickx, Mastaba S3471 (reign of Djer) had a mound covered by bricks as well.[268] Mound-like superstructures have also been postulated for predynastic burial places. According to Dreyer, tomb U-j at Abydos probably had a tumulus.[269] As we have seen, the perimeter of the burial pit of some late predynastic graves at Tarkhan was marked by a rectangular enclosure of mud brick which, if filled in, would have served as a mound-like superstructure marking the location of the grave.[270]

Features of this sort are frequently interpreted as primeval mounds, like the pyramids whose precursors many believe them to be, and the powers of regeneration that some modern scholars have attributed to pyramids are assumed for them as well. Thus Wilkinson says with respect to the royal tombs at Abydos, 'It seems likely that the form of the burial mounds recalled symbolically the primeval mound which first emerged from the floodwaters of chaos at the time of creation. The primeval mound was in later periods at least, a powerful symbol of rebirth and resurrection. Its incorporation into the royal tomb seems to indicate that the resurrection of the dead king was a primary objective, and one which could be assisted magically by the very architecture of the tomb.'[271] Likewise, Dreyer postulates that the hypothetical tumulus that he attributes to Tomb U-j at Abydos represented the primeval mound, the source of all life, and as such was believed to guarantee the resurrection of the deceased.[272] But there is no evidence to support these views, just as there is none to support the idea that the pyramids themselves represented the primeval mound. As shown in section 2.6.4.1, they are based on a misunderstanding of how the ancient Egyptians themselves conceived of that mound. Where tumuli were erected above graves in predynastic and early dynastic Egypt, perhaps their function was the same as the one proposed in that section for the pyramids, viz. marking the presence of the deceased in the landscape and thus preserving their memory and identity.

[267] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 17; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 80; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 54–5; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 233; Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* 3, p. 77 and plates 85–6, 92–3. According to Emery, ibid., p. 75, the tomb was constructed early in the reign of Den, as there is no stairway.

[268] Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 73. This feature is not mentioned in the original publication of the mastaba, Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* 1, pp. 13–17.

[269] G. Dreyer, 'Tomb U-J: A Royal Burial of Dynasty 0 at Abydos', in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 129.

[270] See section 1.9.2.

[271] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 256.

[272] Dreyer in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 129.

2.7. TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE EGYPTIANS OF THE PERIOD UNDER SURVEY BELIEVE THAT THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THIS WORLD WAS MIRRORED IN THE NEXT ONE?

In Chapter 1, we considered the phenomenon of multiple or group burials in predynastic Egypt, those in which more than one body was placed in a single grave.[273] Some think that those responsible for burials of this type were motivated by a belief that the family was important not just in this life but in the next one as well, and that by burying members of a family together they ensured their cohesion as a unit in the hereafter. This view was found to be problematic in two respects. One is that we have no way of knowing whether those bodies discovered in multiple burials were members of the same family or not. The other is that we have a considerable body of evidence at some sites for separate burial of children. The idea that multiple burials ensured family cohesion in the hereafter is difficult to reconcile with this sort of deliberate separation. We should also remember that in predynastic cemeteries where multiple burials do occur they normally constitute a minority of the total number of graves, so if the practice conferred a benefit or advantage in the afterlife, it is hard to see why it was not used more extensively at such sites.

2.7.1. Family tombs

The analogue of such multiple burials in the period under survey is the family tomb. From the third dynasty onward, we find cases where a husband and his wife were interred together in the same tomb, each with an individual burial shaft. Later on in the Old Kingdom, starting in the reign of the fifth dynasty king Niuserre, multiple burials involving several members of the same family become more common. Each member has his or her own shaft, but there is only a single offering chapel or cult place shared by all the occupants of the tomb.[274] Do practices like this reflect a belief in a communal afterlife? Was the function of such burials to ensure the cohesion of the family unit in the hereafter? Did the Egyptians think interring two bodies in the same tomb would guarantee that the individuals in question would be together in the next world? There is no explicit evidence to answer these questions from the period under survey, but a few texts from later in the Old Kingdom do suggest that this was believed to be the case.

In an inscription from the sixth dynasty tomb of a man named Djau at Deir el-Gabrawi, he states that he arranged for his father (also called Djau) to be buried in the

[273] See section 1.8.1.

[274] M. Bárta, 'Sociology of the Minor Cemeteries during the Old Kingdom: The View from Abusir South', *Archiv Orientální* 70 (2002), pp. 292–3; M. Bárta, 'Architectural Innovations in the Development of the Non-Royal Tomb during the Reign of Nyuserra', in P. Jánosi (ed.), *Structure and Significance: Thoughts on Ancient Egyptian Architecture* (Vienna, 2005), pp. 114–17.

same tomb with him so that he might see him every day and be together with him in one place.[275] Contemporary with this is another inscription above a burial shaft in the tomb of a man called Idu at el-Qasr wa es-Sayed. The tomb owner says that he has given the burial shaft to his beloved wife Asenkai and threatens anyone who might try to dispossess her with punishment. He adds that he buried her in his tomb because of the greatness of her *imakh* in his body and proceeds to enumerate those attributes which endeared her to him in life. Then Asenkai herself speaks, threatening anyone who might try to deprive her of the burial shaft with litigation in the presence of the great god.[276] Although Idu does not state explicitly that he arranged for his wife to be buried with him so that they could spend the afterlife together, Asenkai's speech nevertheless implies that she is present in the tomb along with him, presumably as a result of his action on her behalf.

Against this, it must be noted that there are several instances in which husbands were buried without their wives.[277] These include individuals who are known to have been married, since their wives or children are depicted or their names mentioned in the scenes and inscriptions of their tombs.[278] A number of cases are known in which a man's tomb was provided with two burial shafts, but the second one was never used.[279] Equally, some married women had separate tombs of their own.[280] If burial in the same tomb somehow promoted or ensured the cohesion of families in the afterlife, and this was thought to be a desirable state of affairs, then why were women excluded from their husbands' tombs so frequently?

Callender speculates that women may not have had the right to be buried with their husbands in certain areas, or their husbands may have been unable or unwilling to pay the necessary costs of burial, or they may have died before their husbands acquired tombs.[281] Other factors may have been involved as well, but on present evidence it does not seem as if it was deemed essential for members of the same family to be buried together during the period of our survey, making it unlikely that the practice was thought to have any bearing upon family cohesion in the afterlife. If the Egyptians of our period did look forward to the preservation of the family unit in the hereafter, family tombs can hardly be adduced as proof of it.

[275] Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, pp. 146–7. For this passage, cf. N. Alexanian, 'Tomb and Social Status: The Textual Evidence', in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, pp. 3–4.

[276] Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, pp. 116–17.

[277] See e.g. Bárta, *Archiv Orientální* 70 (2002), pp. 294–5.

[278] On depictions of wives and other family members in Old Kingdom tombs, see K. McCorquodale, *Representations of the Family in the Egyptian Old Kingdom: Women and Marriage* (Oxford, 2013); A. Roth, 'The Absent Spouse: Patterns and Taboos in Egyptian Tomb Decoration', *JARCE* 36 (1999), pp. 37–41; A. Roth, 'Little Women: Gender and Hierarchic Proportion in Old Kingdom Mastaba Chapels', in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, pp. 281–96; J. Swinton, 'The Depiction of Wives of Tomb Owners in the Later Old Kingdom', *BACE* 14 (2003), pp. 95–109; V. Callender, 'A Contribution to the Burial of Women in the Old Kingdom', *Archiv Orientální* 70 (2002), pp. 302–6.

[279] Ibid., p. 305.

[280] Ibid., pp. 306–7; McCorquodale, *Representations of the Family in the Egyptian Old Kingdom*, pp. 59–62; Roth, *JARCE* 36 (1999), p. 46.

[281] Callender, *Archiv Orientální* 70 (2002), pp. 307–8.

2.7.2. Subsidiary burials

As we saw in section 1.8.2, subsidiary burials, both human and animal, are attested in Egypt as early as Naqada I. During the first dynasty, they occur in association with royal tombs,[282] non-royal tombs,[283] and with cultic enclosures as well.[284] Thus, contrary to the view expressed by some,[285] they are not an exclusively royal prerogative. The practice seems to die out in the second dynasty, however. Even in the period when burials of this type are attested, their number fluctuates considerably. Among royal tombs at Umm el-Qaab, for example, that of Djer had the largest number of subsidiary graves, 318, while that of Qaa had the smallest, 26. In general, non-royal monuments tend to have fewer graves of this type than royal ones.

Some subsidiary graves mimic features of the larger tombs with which they are associated, e.g. a number of those surrounding the tomb of Djet at Umm el-Qaab have internal niches analogous to the main niche in the southwestern wall of his tomb.[286] The occupants of such graves were provided with grave goods, sometimes they were wrapped in resin-soaked linen, and many were equipped with stelae identifying them or had their names painted on the walls of their burial places.[287] Subsidiary graves can exhibit considerable variation in size among themselves (e.g. B13 and B14, the two graves closest to the tomb of Aha, are much larger than the other graves associated with it),[288] and there is evidence of a clear hierarchical distribution, for example, separate sections for men and women with different functions, in the arrangement of them around some tombs.[289]

A widely held view is that the occupants of first dynasty subsidiary graves were retainers, either of a king or some other important person, who were sacrificed at their master's death and interred alongside him so that they could continue to serve him in the afterlife.[290] If true, this would imply a vision of a communal afterlife in which the

[282] See Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 25–41; G. Dreyer, 'Nebengräber ohne Ende: Der Grabkomplex des Djer in Abydos', *Sokar* 24 (2012), pp. 6–11; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 172–4; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 58 and 63–5.

[283] See D. O'Connor, 'The Ownership of Elite Tombs at Saqqara in the First Dynasty', in Daoud, Bedier, and Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2, p. 224; Köhler in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, pp. 389–90; Bard in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, p. 71; Spencer, *Early Egypt*, p. 97; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 68–9; Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 66 and 69–70; É. Vaudou, 'Les sépultures subsidiaires des grandes tombes de la 1re dynastie égyptienne', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 151; Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 243; Y. Tristant, 'Deux grands tombeaux du cimetière M d'Abou Rawach', *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 138, 140, 142, and 144.

[284] See Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 47–50, 55–7, 73–7, and 79–87; Bestock, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 44–55; Bestock in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, pp. 139–42; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 159–81; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 238–40; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 77.

[285] e.g. Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 27–8.

[286] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 35–7.

[287] Ibid., pp. 25–30 and 33–9; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 235–6.

[288] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 26–7.

[289] Ibid., pp. 34–5.

[290] See e.g. Otto, *Egyptian Art and the Cults of Osiris and Amon*, pp. 17–18; Wilkinson in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*,

bond between master and subordinates was to be maintained in the hereafter. Various pieces of evidence have been cited in support of this idea. One is the age and sex of the bodies found in subsidiary graves. Of those discovered in the subsidiary graves adjacent to Aha's tomb, for example, all that could be sexed were male and most had died around the age of thirty. It is argued that this homogeneity makes it unlikely that the burials represent a random sample of the population who had died and been interred over a period of time.[291]

Architectural features of some subsidiary graves have been adduced as evidence as well. Those around the tomb of Djer, for instance, were arranged in blocks; the graves within each block share walls. Since it would have been difficult to roof these individually, it has been argued that their occupants must have been buried at the same time.[292] The same has been said of the subsidiary graves around the enclosures of that king and Aha.[293] Likewise, the fact that the subsidiary graves around the tombs of Semeherkhet and Qaa abut them directly, forming in each case a single unified structure, has been cited as proof that their occupants must have been interred at the same time as those kings.[294] In all such instances, the assumption is that these had been killed as part of the ruler's burial rites. At Saqqara and elsewhere, some subsidiary graves were built into the fabric of the non-royal tombs with which they are associated and thus must be contemporary with them.[295]

The condition of bodies found in subsidiary graves has also been cited as evidence that their occupants had been put to death. According to Petrie, some of the bodies in the subsidiary graves around Djer's enclosure at Abydos looked as if they had tried to raise their heads as they were being inhumed, and so must have been buried alive.[296] A pinkish stain on the teeth of some occupants of subsidiary graves at Abydos has been interpreted as evidence of strangulation.[297]

Finally, a number of authors have cited depictions of what they identify as human sacrifice on two labels from this period, one discovered in the tomb complex of Aha at Abydos, the other, inscribed with the name of Djer, in the mastaba of Hemaka (S3035) at

p. 1132; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 227; E. Morris, 'Sacrifice for the State: First Dynasty Royal Funerals and the Rites at Macramallah's Triangle', in N. Laneri (ed.), *Performing Death: Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean* (Chicago, 2007), pp. 15–37; K. Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order: The Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 10–15.

[291] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, p. 28.

[292] Ibid., p. 32; Bestock in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 139.

[293] O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 172–3.

[294] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 237; Vaudou, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 162.

[295] Ibid., pp. 161–2.

[296] W.M.F. Petrie, *Tombs of the Courtiers and Oxyrhynkhos* (London, 1925), p. 8 and plate 14; Bestock in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 141.

[297] Morris in Laneri (ed.), *Performing Death*, p. 20. Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 70 note 12, cites additional references.

Saqqara. Both appear to depict one person plunging a knife or similar implement into the chest of another, while the blood from the resulting wound is collected in a bowl.[298]

Some of these pieces of evidence are more convincing than others. In the case of the subsidiary burials associated with Aha's tomb, for example, the fact that all sexable bodies were male could be explained without recourse to the idea of sacrifice by assuming that the graves in this location were reserved for a specific group composed entirely of men, for instance, members of a royal bodyguard.[299] At death, as a reward for their service to the king, they could have been granted the privilege of burial in a place of honour near their master. On the other hand, the fact that all had died at around the same relatively youthful age is more difficult to explain unless the lives of these individuals had been deliberately terminated at a predetermined point. But even this has been called into question. Hendrickx, for example, suggests that the privilege of burial adjacent to Aha's tomb may have been restricted to those members of his entourage who died during the course of his reign while they were still in the prime of life.[300]

The architectural evidence is equivocal as well. The fact that some subsidiary graves were incorporated within or built at the same time as the larger tombs with which they are associated does not necessarily mean that their occupants died and were buried at the same time as the owners of those tombs. Hendrickx has suggested that, in the case of the tombs of Semeherkhet and Qaa at Abydos, the subsidiary graves may already have been receiving interments before those kings had actually died.[301] Köhler has noted mastabas at Saqqara where subsidiary graves are found outside the enclosure walls of the tombs with which they are associated and each has its own burial chamber. Thus the occupants need not have died or have been buried at the same time as one another.[302] At Abydos, it is clear that not all of the subsidiary graves around the tombs of some kings were created at the same time. Rather their number was increased as and when more graves were required.[303] At Saqqara, there is even evidence that some subsidiary graves were reopened for the purpose of making additional interments.[304]

The alleged evidence of violence inflicted on bodies discovered in subsidiary graves has been called into question by some. What has been interpreted as evidence of strangulation, for instance, might be explained in other ways as well.[305] Furthermore, deciding from the position of a skeleton in a grave whether or not its occupant was still alive when buried is bound to be a somewhat subjective exercise.[306]

[298] Morris in Laneri (ed.), *Performing Death*, pp. 20–1 and 31, figure 2.3; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 265–7.

[299] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, p. 28; Morris in Laneri (ed.), *Performing Death*, p. 19; M. Baud and M. Étienne, 'Le vanneau et le couteau. Un rituel monarchique sacrificiel dans l'Égypte de la première dynastie', in J.-P. Albert and B. Midant-Reynes (eds), *Le sacrifice humain en Égypte ancienne et ailleurs* (Paris, 2005), pp. 96–121.

[300] Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 70.

[301] Ibid.

[302] Köhler in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, pp. 389–90.

[303] Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 70.

[304] Vaudou, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 163.

[305] Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 70 note 12.

[306] Ibid., p. 69.

Finally, the pair of labels from Abydos and Saqqara cited above may well depict human sacrifice, but we have no way of knowing whether this was performed in conjunction with a royal burial or not, or whether the victims were destined for subsidiary graves.[307] The claim by Morris that the sacrifices are depicted 'in direct proximity to funerary imagery' is not borne out by the evidence of the objects themselves.[308] The *imiut*-symbol shown on the Abydos label does not yet have funerary associations at this time.[309] Moreover, it and the alleged depiction of human sacrifice occur on separate fragments, so the nature of their relationship to each other is uncertain. What she and Wilkinson describe as a 'mummiform' figure on the Saqqara label,[310] could simply be a statue. In any case, since the figure is being presented to the king, along with a catfish, a bird, a spear, and other items, it can hardly be his own mummy.

The lack of unequivocal evidence that the occupants of subsidiary graves were put to death during the burial rites of the owners of the larger tombs with which theirs were associated invites scepticism as to just how prevalent this practice really was. A practical problem has been noted as well. If the most important members of the king's court were killed when he died so that they could continue to serve him in the afterlife this would have an adverse effect on the stability and continuity of the administration of the country, since inevitably it would result in the loss of the most experienced members of the bureaucracy.[311] Thus one should be cautious about accepting the idea that human sacrifice was a regular feature of the burials of kings and other important persons at this time.

Some occupants of subsidiary graves may have been sacrificed; others may not have been, but were simply buried in the vicinity of those whom they served in life when they died. It is probably best to evaluate the evidence on a case-by-case basis. Subsidiary graves may have been intended primarily as status markers to impress the living. If they were supposed to ensure the continuation of the bond between master and subordinates in the afterlife, then presumably this had ceased to be of importance by the end of the first dynasty when the practice of surrounding tombs with such graves dies out, or else the goal in question was thought to be achievable by some other means.

2.7.3. Planned cemeteries with royal tombs as their focal point

Subsidiary graves apart, royal and non-royal tombs were normally physically separate during the first two dynasties, either built in distinct cemeteries, or in different zones of the same cemetery.[312] This begins to change in the third dynasty, when some non-royal

[307] Vaudou, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 161. For early dynastic ritual killing in non-funerary contexts, see T. Logan, 'The Origins of the *Jmy-wt* Fetish', *JARCE* 27 (1990), pp. 66–7.
[308] Morris in Laneri (ed.), *Performing Death*, pp. 20–1.
[309] Logan, *JARCE* 27 (1990), pp. 67 and 69.
[310] Morris in Laneri (ed.), *Performing Death*, p. 21; *Wilkinson, Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 266.
[311] Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 70; Vaudou, ibid., p. 163.
[312] Roth, *JARCE* 30 (1993), pp. 48–9.

mastabas were situated adjacent to royal funerary complexes.[313] In the reign of Khufu in the fourth dynasty, there is a further development. Now, mastabas were laid out in centrally planned streets around the royal pyramid, and assigned to individual members of the king's court after completion.[314] This has been interpreted by some as an alternative, less violent, way of ensuring that they would enjoy proximity to him and continue to serve him in the afterlife.[315]

But the rigid pattern of tomb planning in evidence around Khufu's pyramid began to break down after his reign. There are fewer private tombs adjacent to the pyramid complex of Khafre at Giza, and many of these postdate its construction. There are even fewer around the complex of Menkaure. Instead, the settlement associated with the latter's complex was allowed to expand until it encroached upon the courtyard of his mortuary temple, turning the area into what has been described as a 'sacred slum', showing that there were limits on the extent of even a ruler's power to influence or control the use of royal mortuary space.[316]

Most tombs after the fourth dynasty were built from the owners' private resources and thus they had greater discretion in deciding where their burial places would be located.[317] At Saqqara during the fifth and sixth dynasties, for example, one finds some tombs that are clustered around royal pyramids and others that are not. For the latter, there might be a different underlying principle that determined their location, e.g. the titles or bureaucratic functions of their owners, or family connections.[318]

If courtiers and officials were expected or hoped to continue serving their master in the afterlife and burial adjacent to a king's tomb really was seen as a means of ensuring the continuation of their service, then it is difficult to see why the example of Khufu was not followed by subsequent rulers. Some tomb owners do express a desire to be *imakh* in the presence of the king, but it was possible to enjoy this status even if one was buried in a distant place. Thus a sixth dynasty official from Abydos who states that he arranged to be interred there through love for his birthplace nevertheless claims to

[313] Van Wetering in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, pp. 1061–2.

[314] For the history of the so-called nucleus cemeteries around Khufu's pyramid, see literature cited in P. Der Manuelian, 'A Case of Prefabrication at Giza? The False Door of Inti', *JARCE* 35 (1998), p. 115 note 1; Roth, *JARCE* 30 (1993), pp. 49–50.

[315] See e.g. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 107.

[316] Ibid., p. 137. For other examples of tombs at Giza which do not follow a centrally planned system, see M. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* 1 (Cairo, 1999), p. 38 note 166; A. Bolshakov, review of K. Kromer, *Nezlet Batran: eine Mastaba aus dem Alten Reich bei Giseh (Ägypten)*, in *BiOr* 51 (1994), p. 62.

[317] Allen in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, pp. 13–14; V. Chauvet, 'Royal Involvement in the Construction of Private Tombs', in Goyon and Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1, pp. 314–15.

[318] Cf. A. Roth, 'The Organization of Royal Cemeteries at Saqqara in the Old Kingdom', *JARCE* 25 (1988), pp. 201–14; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 55–6; Bárta, *Archiv Orientální* 70 (2002), p. 294; Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, p. 269.

be *imakh* in the presence of Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II, the three kings whom he served, all of whom were buried at Saqqara.[319]

This is why some think that reasons of a different nature may underlie the distinctive arrangement of the tombs around Khufu's pyramid, e.g. greater ease of cult provision for their occupants.[320] Although the impressive bulk of the king's burial monument towering above the smaller tombs of his courtiers has suggested an image of unchallenged royal power and authority to many,[321] the reality may have been somewhat different. As archaeologists who study other cultures have long been aware, the size of a leader's tomb is not always an accurate indication of how firm his sway over his followers actually was.[322]

According to one view, the spatial arrangement of Khufu's pyramid cemetery may reflect the dependence of the ruler on his officials rather than the reverse. Mobilizing the resources necessary for such a massive building project would have required their support, in return for which the king made provision for their own burial needs in the area around his pyramid.[323] Undoubtedly, burial in proximity to the ruler would have been viewed as a mark of esteem and therefore an indicator of the tomb owner's high status to posterity. Thus the privilege (or *quid pro quo*, if that is what it was) may have been sought after more for the impression it would create in the world of the living than for any consequence it would have in the afterlife.

To summarize, if the Egyptians of the period under survey did envisage a hereafter in which subordinates continued to serve their superiors, whether a king or some other important person, the fact that master and servants were sometimes buried in close proximity to each other is by itself insufficient to prove this. If such a bond was supposed to be maintained in the next world, however, then a question that arose in our investigation of predynastic subsidiary burials confronts us here as well: were individual groups consisting of a powerful person and those subservient to him supposed to be integrated into a larger social unit or units in the afterlife? What, for instance, would have been the relationship of Aha and his retainers with Djer and his retainers in the hereafter, or that of Aha and his retainers with Khufu and his courtiers? Was any sort of posthumous interaction envisaged between them? In the event of interaction, which ruler took precedence over the other?

[319] Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, pp. 118–19. Cf. Allen in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, p. 13.

[320] Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, p. 269.

[321] On the common tendency of Egyptologists to base assessments of the amount of control that kings exercised over their subjects, and the degree of subservience with which those subjects accepted this control, on the size of their tombs and the lavishness of the resources devoted to building them, see e.g. Köhler in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, p. 385.

[322] See e.g. M. Pearson, *The Archaeology of Death and Burial* (Stroud, 2003), pp. 86–7; H. Vandkilde, *Culture and Change in Central European History 6th to 1st Millennium BC* (Aarhus, 2007), p. 16; Morris in Laneri (ed.), *Performing Death*, p. 15.

[323] Roth, *JARCE* 30 (1993), pp. 52–3.

According to one view, kings lost their individuality after death, being subsumed into an amalgam of all deceased rulers,[324] but this seems improbable given the amount of attention devoted to the maintenance of posthumous cults of individual kings. Textual evidence certainly supports the idea that the Egyptians envisaged a communal afterlife. As we have seen, fifth dynasty offering formulas inscribed in private tombs express the wish that the tomb owner might join or be integrated with groups of other deceased individuals, for example the *imakhu*, the *kas*, or the justified ones.[325] As far as one can judge, however, the groups which the tomb owner aspires to join are never identified as bodies owing allegiance to a particular ruler or other important person, but are always defined in some other way.

2.8. DID THE EGYPTIANS OF THE PERIOD UNDER SURVEY ENVISAGE ANY FORM OF INTERACTION BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD?

2.8.1. The offering cult

The answer to this question is unequivocally yes. The most important context for interaction between the living and the dead in our period was the offering cult, whether royal or non-royal. Living persons presented offerings to the deceased on a regular basis, and on the occasion of important festivals as well.[326] The venue for this was normally at or adjacent to the tomb. But the deceased could also benefit from offerings presented away from the place of burial. At Cemetery U at Abydos, 8–13 m to the south of tomb U-j and the adjacent tomb U-k, a deposit of more than 100 clay vessels ranging in date from Naqada III to the first dynasty was discovered, along with fragments of an alabaster basin inscribed with the name of Narmeher. It has been conjectured that this may have been a place for presenting offerings. If so, was it dedicated specifically to the occupant of U-j, to that of U-k, to both, or to those buried in Cemetery U as a group? Because the deposit is not situated in the immediate vicinity of a specific tomb, we cannot be certain.[327]

Aha, the initial king of the first dynasty, was buried in Cemetery B at Abydos. All subsequent rulers of that dynasty, and the last two rulers of the second dynasty, were buried in the adjacent cemetery of Umm el-Qaab. However each had, or is presumed to

[324] Cf. Eyre in Powell (ed.), *Labor in the Ancient Near East*, p. 22; Quirke, *The Cult of Ra*, p. 117.
[325] See section 2.3.1.
[326] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 10 and 18.
[327] See G. Dreyer, *Umm el-Qaab 1: Das prädynastiche Königsgrab U-j und seine frühen Schriftzeugnisse* (Mainz am Rhein, 1998), pp. 15–16 with Abb. 1 showing location of deposit; G. Dreyer, U. Hartung, and F. Pumpenmeier, 'Umm el-Qaab: Nachuntersuchungen im frühzeitlichen Königsfriedhof, 5./6. Vorbericht', *MDAIK* 49 (1993), p. 38; Dreyer in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 129; Effland, *Sokar* 16 (2008), p. 11.

have had, a cultic enclosure at Abydos as well.[328] Three are attested from the reign of Aha, the initial ruler of the first dynasty, the two smallest of which may have belonged to members of that king's court.[329] The cultic enclosures are located about 1.5 km away from Umm el-Qaab in the Northern Cemetery, close to the site of the later Osiris temple. In form, they are rectangular open spaces enclosed by niched mud brick walls. The remains of small free-standing mud brick structures have been identified in some enclosures. These contained ceramics and remains of organic materials. Some speculate that they may have been cult chapels where offerings were presented to the deceased kings or their *kas*.[330] We cannot say whether this was the case or not, since the function of the enclosures themselves is unknown. If they did contain cult chapels, then we would have here further instances in which a burial place and the venue where offerings were presented to its occupant were physically separate.

Through the power of the spoken and written word, the dead could even benefit from offerings presented in other cities. In an inscription from the tomb of the fourth dynasty queen Mersiankh III at Giza, for instance, it is requested that the offering formula be recited for her in her tomb, in Busiris, in Abydos, and in every place where it is recited for a noble woman.[331] Another inscription from the fifth dynasty mastaba of Akhethotep at Giza requests that the tomb owner receive all good offerings of the necropolis, Busiris, Abydos, and the pyramid of Khafre.[332]

2.8.2. Other forms of cultic interaction between the living and the dead?

According to some, the cultic enclosures at Abydos were supposed to function as royal palaces, or palace complexes in a broader sense, where kings continued to reign in the next world much as they did in this one.[333] Others view them as arenas in which the monarch could display his control over the territory he ruled, the precursors of the open spaces in Djoser's step pyramid complex at Saqqara.[334] The interpretation of Djoser's complex as a union of the previously separate royal tomb and enclosure within the

[328] See Bestock, *The Development of Royal Cult at Abydos*; Bestock, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 43–59; Bestock in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, pp. 139–42; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 159–81; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 238–40; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 77.

[329] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Cult at Abydos*, pp. 88–102. For the possibility that a further recently discovered enclosure dates to Aha's reign as well, see L. Bestock, 'Brown University Abydos Project: Preliminary Report on the First Two Seasons', *JARCE* 48 (2012), pp. 40–5.

[330] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 92–3; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 168–72 and 178; Papazian in Vymazalová and Bárta (eds), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt (The Third Millennium B.C.)*, p. 71.

[331] Dunham and Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, p. 18 and figure 10.

[332] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 18; S. Hassan, *Excavations at Gîza* 1 (Oxford, 1932), p. 77, figure 36.

[333] Wilkinson in Hendrickx, Friedman, Ciałowicz, and Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams*, p. 1132; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 161–2 and 178–81.

[334] B. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (London and New York, 1989), pp. 53–62.

confines of a single cultic space is a popular one in the literature.[335] It incorporated model or dummy ritual structures, antecedents for which are attested in second dynasty royal and non-royal tombs.[336] Thus the complex, according to some, provided a venue where the deceased king could celebrate the same rites, including the *sed*-festival, as he did when alive.[337] How much of all this is true we are unable to say. If such activities did take place in the Abydos enclosures and Djoser's pyramid complex, then clearly they would have offered additional scope for interaction between the living and the dead.

2.8.3. The dead as benefactors or antagonists of the living

As we have seen, some kings of our period are depicted overcoming the forces of chaos or performing other beneficial acts in the presence of divinities on the walls of their mortuary temples and other parts of their funerary complexes. According to one view, this allowed them to contribute to the maintenance of order in this world even after death.[338] If so, this would be an instance of the deceased performing service for the living rather than the other way around.

On a more personal level, clear evidence that the dead were thought to be able to reciprocate the care shown for them by the living is found in texts addressed to visitors in some tombs of our period and slightly later. These mention favours that the deceased will perform for them if they meet certain conditions. In the tomb of Ti at Saqqara (mid-fifth dynasty), for instance, he asserts that he will be a supporter in the court of the great god for those who enter his tomb in the right state of purity, let nothing hateful happen to them, and prevent them being criticized in the great god's presence.[339] Similar promises occur in tomb inscriptions of the sixth dynasty, where the deceased also undertake to intercede in the necropolis on behalf of those who recite the offering formula for them.[340]

But relations between the living and the dead were not always harmonious during the period of our survey. Cases were noted in section 2.2.1 where the faces of tomb owners on offering stelae from Helwan had been deliberately damaged as a means of

[335] e.g. Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 246–7; Spencer, *Early Egypt*, p. 71.

[336] Lacher in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, p. 447; Lacher in Friedman and Fiske (eds), *Egypt at its Origins* 3, pp. 224–7; Lacher-Raschdorff, *Das Grab des Königs Ninetjer in Saqqara*, pp. 144–8. Lacher in Friedman and Fiske (eds), *Egypt at its Origins* 3, p. 224 note 3, says there is a similar feature in Tomb 505H4 at Helwan (time of Ninetjer), so this is not restricted to royal tombs.

[337] Lacher in Friedman and Fiske (eds), *Egypt at its Origins* 3, pp. 224–7; Lacher-Raschdorff, *Das Grab des Königs Ninetjer in Saqqara*, pp. 146–8; Friedman in Der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* 1, pp. 339–42; R. Friedman, 'The Underground Relief Panels of King Djoser at the Step Pyramid Complex', *JARCE* 32 (1995), pp. 8 and 42; R. Stadelmann, 'Origins and Development of the Funerary Complex of Djoser', in P. Der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* 2 (Boston, 1996), pp. 797–8; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 28; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 212–15 and 249; Arnold in Shafer (ed.), *Temples of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 42–3 and 46.

[338] See Stockfisch, *Untersuchungen zum Totenkult des ägyptischen Königs im Alten Reich* 1, pp. 397–8 and 400.

[339] Edel, *MDAIK* 13 (1944), pp. 67–8.

[340] Ibid., pp. 16–17.

preventing them from consuming the food and drink depicted in front of them. We have also seen that some tomb owners found it necessary to threaten anyone who might violate their burial places with litigation or some other form of punishment.[341] It is evident from this that not all visitors to tomb chapels were motivated by solicitude for their occupants.

2.9. DID EGYPTIAN IDEAS ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE VARY FROM ONE LOCALITY TO ANOTHER DURING THE PERIOD OF OUR SURVEY OR WERE THEY MORE OR LESS THE SAME THROUGHOUT THE LAND?

There is ample evidence that burial practices and customs varied from one part of Egypt to another during our period. For example, the practice of dismembering the body prior to burial is attested at some sites, e.g. Giza, Meidum, and Deshasha, but not at others. Second dynasty kings buried at Abydos had cultic enclosures, those buried at Saqqara did not. So-called slab stelae are found only at Giza, specifically in nucleus cemeteries 1200, 2100, and 4000 to the west of Khufu's pyramid.[342] Contracted burials are more common in provincial cemeteries than they are in Memphite ones. There is also evidence for change in such customs over time. Subsidiary burials cease to be associated with the tombs of important persons after the first dynasty. Step pyramids give way to true pyramids after the third dynasty. Reserve heads are attested almost exclusively during the early fourth dynasty.[343] Kings did not begin to construct sun temples until the fifth dynasty. These are only a few examples selected at random from the material that we have surveyed.

But custom is not the same as belief, so whether these differences in burial practice reflect different conceptions of the hereafter is impossible to say. Did the second dynasty kings buried at Abydos conceive of the afterlife in different terms to those buried at Saqqara? Were subsidiary burials abandoned because ideas about the next world and its requirements changed at the end of the first dynasty? We are not in a position to answer such questions, since we do not know why cultic enclosures were constructed or tombs of important individuals surrounded with subsidiary burials in the first place.

Some differences that we have observed in burial provision may be due to economic rather than religious factors. Contracted burials, for instance, are characteristic of poorer graves where the deceased were interred without coffins, and there are more of these in provincial cemeteries than in the wealthier ones nearer the capital where important officials were buried. But in some provincial cemeteries, even important

[341] Ibid., pp. 3–11; Morschauser, *Threat-Formulae in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 73–6.
[342] Der Manuelian, *Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis*, p. xxxi.
[343] For the only known exceptions, see Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), p. 227; Nuzzolo in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 203.

individuals were buried in contracted position, so this explanation is not valid in every case.[344] Other differences may be explicable in terms of fashion or individual choice.[345] Still others, the reserve heads, for example, are conjectured by some to reflect a policy of state planning and provision of particular items of burial equipment.[346] But as long as we do not know why such items were placed in tombs, we cannot say who was responsible for doing so, whether the state or the tomb owners themselves.

Were different divinities associated with the afterlife in different parts of Egypt? Possibly, but it is difficult to judge with the evidence at our disposal. As we have seen, the earliest unambiguous references to a god called Khentiamentiu, 'Foremost of the westerners', occur on seal impressions found in first dynasty royal tombs in the cemetery of Umm el-Qaab at Abydos.[347] It is tempting to conclude from this that he was the local god of the dead, but was Abydos the only place where he was regarded as such during the first dynasty? One problem is that we do not know whether 'Foremost of the westerners' is a name or an epithet. If the latter, it could refer to a deity venerated elsewhere in the country either under his actual name or a different epithet or epithets, for example, Anubis. The name of that god is attested on seal impressions from the first dynasty Saqqara mastaba S3504 (reign of Djet), so his cult was certainly in existence at this time.[348] The matter is complicated by the fact that a number of sources of first dynasty date from both Abydos and Saqqara mention a deity whose name is written solely with the ideogram of the recumbent jackal, which could be read either as *'Inpw* or Khentiamentiu.[349] Depending on how one chooses to read this sign, estimates of the role played by these deities at the two sites in question are bound to vary considerably.

2.10. WERE THERE ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ROYAL AND NON-ROYAL EXPECTATIONS OF THE AFTERLIFE DURING THE PERIOD UNDER SURVEY?

At first this might seem like an unusual question to ask. It is an article of faith among most Egyptologists that there were significant differences between royal and non-royal expectations of the afterlife. This can be illustrated with a few quotations from the literature. According to Allen, 'It has long been recognised that Egyptians in the Old Kingdom thought of their own afterlife in somewhat different terms than the one they

[344] See Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 21–6.
[345] Cf. Alexanian in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, p. 8; Der Manuelian, *Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis*, pp. 168–9.
[346] See e.g. Nuzzolo in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 213.
[347] See section 2.4.2.
[348] See Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* 2, p. 121, figure 171. For the reading, cf. section 2.4.3.
[349] Kahl, *Frühägyptisches Wörterbuch* 1, pp. 42–3. Cf. section 2.4.3.

imagined for their king.'[350] Wilkinson, speaking of early dynastic Egypt, says 'Only the king, as a member of the divine sphere, was guaranteed an afterlife in the company of the gods.'[351] Snape offers a more chronologically nuanced view: 'Certainly by the Old Kingdom it is clear that the royal afterlife was fundamentally different to that of everyone else, but the extent to which these ideas were already present in Dynasties 1 and 2 is obscure.'[352] Elsewhere, however, he says of the first dynasty, 'there is enough evidence to suggest that the differences between a royal and a non-royal afterlife, which are very evident in the Old Kingdom, began here'.[353]

But our survey has revealed a problem with such views. Leaving speculation aside, there is relatively little that we can say with certainty about either royal or non-royal expectations for the afterlife during the period we have covered. How then can we judge whether they were actually different? Although Snape believes that there was a difference, he nevertheless acknowledges, 'It must be admitted that we cannot, with any real confidence, describe what the kings of Dynasties 1–3 thought would happen to them after death.'[354] In the light of our survey, I think one could extend this to apply to the rulers of the fourth dynasty, and perhaps some of the earlier kings of the fifth dynasty, as well.

2.10.1. Relationships with gods in the hereafter as a royal privilege?

The idea that kings in our period expected to spend the afterlife in the company of gods, while their subjects were denied such companionship, does not really seem to be borne out by the evidence we have examined. On the one hand, rulers are depicted in the presence of divinities within their pyramid complexes, the earliest such representations dating to the reign of Djoser in the third dynasty. On the other, little of this decoration relates specifically to the afterlife. As noted in section 2.4.6, the king is shown carrying out the same duties that he performed when alive. We can compare such scenes with those from private tombs of the same period that show the tomb owner carrying out his official duties or engaging in other activities characteristic of this world. The fact that no deities are depicted in the latter does not prove that private tomb owners were denied access to the gods in the next life but rather that interaction with the divine world was not a regular feature of their existence in this one. The living king's responsibilities, by contrast, did bring him into contact with the gods, and this is reflected in the decoration of the royal funerary monument.

That private tomb owners were believed to interact with deities during the period of our survey is shown by the offering formulas of the fourth dynasty and later in which Anubis is asked to provide their material needs, ensuring that a steady supply of offerings reaches them, but also to help them reach the west and enjoy the status of *imakh* in the

[350] Allen in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, p. 9.
[351] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 227.
[352] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 27.
[353] Ibid., p. 25.
[354] Ibid., p. 55.

presence of the great god. Starting in the fifth dynasty, dead people are described as or express the wish to be *imakh* in the presence of Anubis and other gods like Re and Ptah as well.[355] There is little evidence for this sort of relationship between kings and deities in the afterlife during the period of our survey, but this is probably because we have no examples of royal offering formulas from this time, and it is primarily offering formulas that speak of such associations. Only in the Pyramid Texts, from the late fifth dynasty onward, do we begin to find references to the king as *imakh* before a deity.

As we have seen, a number of theories that posit the existence of belief in a unique or exclusive relationship between kings and gods in the afterlife, e.g. the idea that Khufu identified himself with Re, or that rulers buried in pyramids were thereby enabled to ascend to a divine realm in the sky, do not really withstand close scrutiny. More ambiguous are cases like the seal impressions listing early kings in conjunction with Khentiamentiu found in first dynasty royal tombs at Umm el-Qaab. These might be interpreted as evidence for belief in a special relationship between the rulers in question and the god in the hereafter, but alternative explanations are possible as well, e.g. that the presence of the god's name on the seal was a sign of its official character.[356]

2.10.2. The relative importance of royal and non-royal spheres as sources of innovation in ideas about and preparations for the hereafter

A corollary to the view that royal expectations for the afterlife were fundamentally different to non-royal ones during the period we have surveyed is the belief held by many Egyptologists that the royal sphere enjoyed primacy in terms of creativity and invention. It was the source of all innovation as far as ideas about and preparations for the hereafter were concerned. As a result, in cases where Egyptian rulers and their subjects are known to have practised the same funerary customs, undergone the same rituals, used the same items of burial equipment, incorporated the same architectural features in their tombs, or subscribed to the same beliefs about the afterlife, it is normally assumed that these must have originated in the royal sphere and filtered down to the non-royal sphere afterwards.[357] The king's subjects aspired to benefit from innovations introduced in the royal sphere and therefore borrowed or copied them.

Is this view really correct? How many ideas, rituals and customs pertaining to the afterlife, and how many items of burial equipment and architectural features of tombs, are actually attested in the royal sphere first during the period of our survey? How many make their initial appearance in the non-royal sphere? Table 2.1, which begins at the top of the following page, is an attempt to provide the answers to these questions, using evidence drawn from the material that we have examined as a basis.

[355] See sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.5. [356] Section 2.4.2.
[357] See e.g. Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 93.

Table 2.1. Earliest attestations of ideas, rituals, and customs pertaining to the afterlife, as well as items of burial equipment and architectural features of tombs

group for whom attested:	kings	subjects
ka, 'double' (2.1.3)	1 (Anedjib)	1 (Den)
akh, 'glorified spirit' (2.1.2)	5	4
imakh (2.5, 2.10.1)	5	4
judgement and justification in the afterlife (2.5)	5 (Unis)	4/5
Anubis as deity associated with the dead (2.1.1, 2.4.3)	3	1
Khentiamentiu as deity associated with the dead (2.3.2, 2.4.2)	1 (Den)	5[358]
nṯr ʿ, 'great god' (2.4.5, 2.5)	5	4
travel to the west (2.3.2)	5	4
sakhu, 'glorification spells' (2.6.1)	5	4
Opening of the Mouth Ritual (2.6.1)	5	4
canonical offering list (2.2.1)	5	4
deceased benefits from rites at Abydos and Busiris (2.8.1)	5/6	4
rituals involving *ḏr.t*, 'kite' (2.6.3)	5 (Unis)	5 (late)
boat burials (2.3.4)	1 (late)[359]	1 (Aha)
wrapping corpse in resin-soaked linen (2.1.1)	1 (Djer)	1(Djer)
mummification (2.1.1)	5[360]	4
subsidiary burials (2.7.2, 2.8.1, 2.10.3)	1 (Aha)	1 (Aha?)[361]
granite sarcophagus	4 (Khufu)	4 (Snefru)[362]
scenes showing offering bearers (2.2.1)	4	3[363]
depiction of tomb owner seated before offerings as a means of ensuring sustenance (2.2.1)	5	2[364]
scenes showing deceased performing ritual and other activities characteristic of this world (2.2.1, 2.4.6, 2.10.1)	3	3
name of occupant inscribed on tomb wall (2.7.2)	3	1 (Djet)
hieroglyphic writing as means of formal display in tomb decoration (2.2.1)	3	2
relief decoration in superstructure of tomb	4	3[365]

(*continued*)

[358] Or earlier, if some examples of the divine name or epithet written only with the recumbent jackal sign are to be read in this way rather than as *ʾInp*, 'Anubis'. As noted in section 2.4.2, it cannot be excluded that Khentiamentiu in sources prior to the fifth dynasty is simply an epithet of Anubis rather than the name of a distinct deity.

[359] The boats in question were buried adjacent to a cultic enclosure rather than a royal tomb. This has been attributed to a king of the second half of the first dynasty.

[360] For remains of royal mummies from our period, see Theis, *Deine Seele zum Himmel, dein Leichnam zur Erde*, p. 25, and literature cited there.

[361] All three cultic enclosures securely dated to the reign of this king had subsidiary burials associated with them. The two smallest may have belonged to members of his court but this is not certain.

[362] The earliest known sarcophagus of Aswan granite was made for the owner of mastaba M17 at Meidum. See Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 290.

[363] El-Metwally, *Entwicklung der Grabdekoration in den altägyptischen Privatgräbern*, pp. 18–31.

[364] These appear for the first time on stone slabs found in tombs at Helwan and other sites. Seals depicting a person seated at an offering table are attested as early as the first dynasty (see section 2.1.2), but their primary purpose was practical rather than religious, to label commodities destined for deposit in the tomb. See Köhler and Jones, *Helwan 2* p. 93.

[365] See Arnold in Shafer (ed.), *The Temples of Ancient Egypt*, p. 47; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 117–20.

Table 2.1. Continued

group for whom attested:	kings	subjects
decorated burial chamber	5 (Unis)	5 (Djedkare Izezi)[366]
false door (2.2.1)	5[367]	4 (early)
offering formula (2.2.1)	5	4
stelae (2.2.1, 2.7.2)	1 (Djet)	1 (Djer)
statues in offering cult (2.2.1)	1 (Den?)[368]	1 (Qaa)
rock-cut tomb designed as house (2.3.2)	2	2
tomb in mastaba form (2.6.4.1, 2.10.3)	4[369]	1
stepped structure for tomb (2.3.3.2)	3	1 (Anedjib)
offering chapel to north of tomb (2.2.1)	3	1
tomb superstructure and enclosure combined (2.8.2)	3	1[370]
subterranean mound above burial chamber (2.6.4.2)	1 (Aha)	1 (Djer or Den)[371]
serdab (2.2.3)	3 (Djoser)	3/4
palace façade architecture (2.10.3)	1 (Aha)[372]	1 (Aha)
stairway leading down to burial chamber (2.3.3.2)	1 (Den)	1 (Den)[373]
portcullis grooves and slabs blocking access to burial	1 (Den)	1 (Den)[374]
burial chamber excavated in rock	2	1[375]
storage magazines excavated in rock	2	1[376]

[366] See N. Kanawati, *Decorated Burial Chambers of the Old Kingdom* (Cairo, 2010), pp. 43–50; N. Kanawati, 'Decoration of Burial Chambers, Sarcophagi and Coffins in the Old Kingdom', in Daoud, Bedier, and Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2, pp. 55–8; Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, pp. 113–17.

[367] Some think that the offering chapel adjacent to the mastaba tomb of Shepseskaf, last ruler of the fourth dynasty, had a false door in the rear wall, but no trace of this has actually survived. See Arnold in Shafer (ed.), *The Temples of Ancient Egypt*, p. 59.

[368] For the possibility that the small room adjoining the outer wall of the southern corner of the tomb of Den may have held a cult statue of the king, see G. Dreyer, 'Eine Statue des Königs Dewen aus Abydos?', in S. D'Auria (ed.), *Offerings to the Discerning Eye: An Egyptological Medley in Honor of Jack A. Josephson* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), pp. 73–8; Dreyer, *Sokar* 24 (2012), p. 10; G. Dreyer and J. Josephson, 'Royal Sculpture of the Predynastic and Archaic Periods', *JARCE* 47 (2011), pp. 57–8; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 236.

[369] The only ruler buried in a mastaba during the period of our survey was Shepseskaf of the fourth dynasty. However, the step pyramid of Djoser was originally designed as a mastaba, so one could argue that this form was used, or at least envisaged, for royal tombs as early as the third dynasty.

[370] See Spencer, *Early Egypt*, pp. 101–3.

[371] According to Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 73, Saqqara mastaba S3471 (reign of Djer) had a subterranean mound above the burial chamber, but this is not mentioned in Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty* 1, pp. 13–70, the original publication of the tomb. For the subterranean mound of Saqqara mastaba S3507 (reign of Den), see section 2.6.4.2.

[372] The only royal monuments with recessed niches from this reign are cultic enclosures.

[373] For private mastabas of the reign of Den at Saqqara with this feature, see Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 77; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 75; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 17; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 80.

[374] This method of sealing the tomb is attested in Saqqara mastabas S3035 and S3036. See Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 80.

[375] See Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 74 and 78.

[376] The earliest known magazines of this type are those of Saqqara mastaba S 3035 (reign of Den). See Lacher in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, p. 433; Lacher-Raschdorff, *Das Grab des Königs Ninetjer in Saqqara*, pp. 137–9.

niche in southwest wall of tomb (2.3.2)	1 (Djer)	1 (Djet)
dummy or model cultic structures (2.8.2)	2	2
columns in lotus form[377]	5 (Neferirkare)	5 (Niuserre)
brick-walled burial chamber with wooden roof[378]	1 (Aha)	1 (Aha)
use of stone in construction of burial chamber	1 (Den)[379]	1 (Djer)[380]
superstructure of tomb built of stone	3	4[381]
tomb of important person as focus of cemetery (2.7.3)	4 (Khufu)	3/4[382]
cultic enclosures (2.7.2, 2.8.1, 2.8.2, 2.10.3)	1 (Aha)[383]	1 (Aha?)[384]

The table omits phenomena that are only attested for one group, e.g. valley temples and pyramids for kings, and dismemberment of the corpse and reserve heads for their subjects. Also omitted are phenomena that have been claimed to be specific to one group or the other but for which we have found no real evidence in our survey, e.g. belief in a distinct celestial afterlife for kings. The numbers in brackets after each entry in the first column refer to the section or sections of this chapter where the phenomenon in question is discussed. The numbers in the second and third columns refer to the dynasties during which the various phenomena are first attested in each sphere, royal and non-royal. Where a phenomenon makes its first appearance in both spheres during the same dynasty, the names of the individual kings in whose reigns it appears in each during the dynasty in question have been added in brackets where known to indicate priority in the record as precisely as possible.

The foregoing list is not exhaustive, but does provide a representative sample. Of the phenomena in the list, 31 are definitely attested for the first time in the non-royal

[377] For lotus columns as architectural elements in Old Kingdom royal and non-royal tombs, see M. Verner, 'The Columns of Abusir', in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, pp. 344–7 and 349–51. He notes (ibid., p. 350), that the earliest known evidence for the lotus column in a burial context is the model of one discovered in a first dynasty private tomb at Helwan.

[378] See Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 23–4 and 26–7.

[379] Bárta, *Journey to the West*, p. 70; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 236.

[380] Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 73–4. For other examples of the use of stone in the construction of burial chambers of first dynasty private tombs, see Köhler, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 119–22 and 127.

[381] Stone was employed as a building material in the superstructures of private tombs as early as the first dynasty, but it was not until the beginning of the fourth dynasty that they were constructed entirely of that material. See Köhler, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 122; Bárta, *Journey to the West*, pp. 91–2.

[382] A small cemetery of third and fourth dynasty date at Abydos (Cemetery D) consists of a number of tombs organized around a large mastaba containing two burial shafts. See T.E. Peet and W. Loat, *The Cemeteries of Abydos* 3 (London, 1913), pp. 8–22; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 101.

[383] Three cultic enclosures at North Abydos are securely dated to the reign of this king. Pottery found in the vicinity of the most recently discovered cultic enclosure there suggests that it could date as early as the reign of the proto-king Narmeher, the predecessor of Aha, but a date in the latter's reign is also possible. See Bestock, *JARCE* 48 (2012), pp. 39–42, for discussion.

[384] For the possibility that the two smaller enclosures at North Abydos that can be securely dated to the reign of Aha belonged to members of his court, perhaps those individuals buried in graves B13 and B14, see Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 88–102.

sphere, while only 6, or possibly 7, are initially attested in the royal sphere. Thus, at least in the period covered by our survey, significantly more innovations in the realm of funerary belief, provision, and practice appear in the non-royal sphere first than do in the royal sphere, the opposite of what the conventional view would lead one to expect. Clearly that view, according to which the royal sphere was the source of all such innovations, is untenable.

Does this mean that we should replace it with the opposite view that the non-royal sphere was the true source of new ideas about and preparations for the hereafter? In my opinion, this would be a mistake. As Franke has noted, 'The oldest known evidence should not be regarded as the earliest ever existing.'[385] The fact that something is attested first in the non-royal sphere is no proof that this is where it originated, just as the fact that something is attested first in the royal sphere does not prove that it originated there. A more likely scenario is that the boundaries separating royal and non-royal spheres were less rigid than most Egyptologists have imagined, permitting a mutual exchange of ideas between the two, with a considerable amount of both innovation and borrowing on either side.[386]

This suggestion is supported by the fact that no less than 9, and perhaps as many as 11, phenomena in Table 2.1 appear more or less simultaneously in both royal and non-royal spheres during the period of our survey. These include the use of brick-walled burial chambers with wooden roofs, dummy or model cultic structures, stairways leading down to the burial chamber, palace façade architecture, the concept of the rock-cut tomb as a house or dwelling place, scenes showing the deceased performing ritual and other activities they performed when alive, the practice of wrapping the corpse in resin-soaked linen, and possibly cultic enclosures and subsidiary burials.[387] Moreover, in a number of instances where a phenomenon is attested in one sphere first, it does not take long before we find it in the other as well. Thus, the first known royal subterranean mound occurs in the tomb of Aha in Cemetery B at Abydos, but non-royal ones are attested at Saqqara as early as the reign of Djer or Djet. The earliest private funerary stelae come from subsidiary graves around the tomb of Djer at Umm el-Qaab, while the oldest preserved royal stela was discovered at the tomb of his successor Djet nearby. So even at this early date, a pattern of relatively swift transfer of beliefs and practices from one sphere to the other is discernible.

A final point worth noting is that some phenomena listed in Table 2.1 are already attested in predynastic Egypt, before there were any kings. These include niches in exterior walls of tombs, the practice of wrapping the corpse in resin-soaked linen, and

[385] D. Franke, Review of A. El-Khouli and N. Kanawati, *Quseir el-Amarna: The Tombs of Pepy-ankh and Khewen-wekh*, in *JEA* 79 (1993), p. 291.

[386] Cf. the summary of the development of royal and private tomb architecture during the first three dynasties in Lacher-Raschdorff, *Das Grab des Königs Ninetjer in Saqqara,* p. 253.

[387] Both of the two smaller cultic enclosures securely dated to the reign of Aha at Abydos had subsidiary burials associated with them. For the possibility that these belonged to members of his court, see reference cited in note 384.

subsidiary burials.[388] Thus there is nothing intrinsically royal about them. In fact, the first two appear initially in relatively modest graves rather than more elaborate ones, further proof that innovation and wealth are not invariably linked where beliefs and practices pertaining to the afterlife are concerned.

O'Connor has observed, 'Grand theories are proposed about early culture and kingship in Egypt, but are based on heterogeneous and random archaeological data. So far, these data are an inadequate foundation for the complex speculations built upon them, for the evidence still has substantial ambiguities and gaps.'[389] One significant factor influencing such theories and speculations is what Wengrow has described as the 'occasionally obsessive interest in the chronology and succession of named rulers' that characterizes Egyptian archaeology, which he contrasts with 'the notion of historical change through shifts in the configuration of customary practice, rather than dictates from some higher agency', current in some other disciplines.[390] If the king is all important in the mind of the modern researcher, then any scholarly speculation about his position in relation to his subjects, whether in this life or the next, is bound to reflect this. That is probably why the top-down model, according to which ideas invariably flow from the royal to the non-royal sphere, is so prevalent in the literature.

2.10.3. Tomb size as an index of expectations for the afterlife?

Is the view that royal expectations for the afterlife were grander than non-royal ones during the period of our survey based on anything other than 'heterogeneous and random archaeological data'? The main reason for the belief that they were grander is that royal tombs were grander than non-royal ones during this time. Thus a direct link is assumed to have existed between the size and cost of a tomb and the afterlife expectations of its occupant: the more resources devoted to its construction and decoration, the loftier the ambitions of the tomb owner for his existence in the hereafter. Kings have the largest, most elaborate tombs, so they must have envisaged an afterlife of commensurate grandeur. Such an assumption is implicit in Snape's reference to 'the gulf in both deployment of resources and underlying expectations for the afterlife' that separated the king from everyone else, including the highest elite, during the Old Kingdom.[391] That there was a gulf in deployment of resources is evident from empirical observation. But why must this be linked to a gulf in expectations for the afterlife?

As we saw in Chapter 1, Egyptian cemeteries of the predynastic period provide ample evidence of varying levels of expenditure on burials, and varying degrees of access to the resources used in equipping them. These differences become more pronounced in the final phase of the period, Naqada III.[392] But we found nothing to suggest that those with more elaborate burials had fundamentally different

[388] See sections 1.9.2, 1.2.1, and 1.8.2.
[389] O'Connor, *Abydos*, p. 137.
[390] Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, p. 127.
[391] Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 55.
[392] See section 1.8.3.

expectations of the hereafter to those interred in humbler fashion. In fact, there are many societies with a range of different modes of burial provision, some more costly than others, but these do not reflect different expectations for the afterlife, only varying levels of resources that people are able or prepared to commit to burial. A more elaborate burial may imply higher status in this life, but not necessarily in the hereafter. The same applies to the period under survey now. Undoubtedly, the king occupied a unique position in Egyptian society while alive, but we have found no evidence that this was expected to continue after his death or, for that matter, evidence that other aspects of the social structure of this world would be mirrored in the next one.

Furthermore, although most royal tombs were larger and more elaborate than non-royal tombs during our period, there are nevertheless some exceptions. The enormous mastabas built for important officials of the first dynasty at North Saqqara, for instance, are much more impressive than the tombs built for the rulers whom they served at Abydos, so much so that at one time it was believed that they were the actual burial places of those kings and the tombs at Abydos only cenotaphs.[393] Here too, one sees a 'gulf in deployment of resources' separating kings and their subjects, only in this case it is the latter who appear to have occupied the more extravagant side of the chasm.

Some argue that, if one considers each royal tomb at Abydos to form a single funerary complex with one of the cultic enclosures erected some distance away nearer the cultivation, then the result would be a monument larger than any contemporary mastaba at Saqqara, thus restoring primacy in terms of size and status to the kings' tombs.[394] This argument is questionable, however. Did each first dynasty ruler buried at Abydos actually have an enclosure, as is generally assumed? To date, only those belonging to Aha, Djer, Djet, and Meretneith have been located and identified with certainty.[395] Moreover, Aha's is not the only one attributable to his reign. Two smaller enclosures, and possibly a third, are contemporary with it. If all of these were built for that king, then clearly there was not a one-to-one relationship between tomb and enclosure. On the other hand, if the smaller enclosures belonged to members of Aha's court rather than the king himself, then enclosures were not exclusively a royal prerogative. Evidently, not every courtier had an enclosure. If they were optional for them, then perhaps they were optional for kings as well.

The enclosures are often described as 'funerary' in the literature, since like some tombs they have boat and subsidiary burials, human and non-human, associated with them, but it is by no means certain that they only came into use after a monarch's death.[396] This is another reason why one should be cautious about

[393] Cf. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, pp. 78–9; Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, pp. 259–60; Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), pp. 62–72.

[394] See e.g. O'Connor, *Abydos*, p. 162.

[395] In Djet's case, only the subsidiary graves around the enclosure have been excavated. The walls of the structure itself have not been located. See Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, pp. 48–9.

[396] For the suggestion that they may have started to function prior to this, see Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 277; Bestock in Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids*, p. 140.

associating them too closely with tombs. Some show signs of deliberate destruction. According to one theory, the enclosures were ritually 'killed' so that those for whom they were built could have access to them in the afterlife.[397] If so, then they could hardly form part of a complex with the tomb, which was left undamaged. On balance, it is probably better to accept the fact that kings did not always have the largest burial places during the period of our survey.

Some think that even this is further evidence of the power wielded by the ruler, however. According to Hendrickx, the fact that non-royal tombs could be larger than royal ones and even incorporate supposedly 'royal' features like recessed niches on the exterior walls (so-called palace façade architecture) does not mean that their owners were trying to compete with kings. Rather, it was 'une expression du pouvoir des rois par les tombes de leurs serviteurs principaux'. He thinks that 'Pour les gens de l'époque, ces tombes monumentales, dont les immenses silhouettes dominaient la capitale Memphis, représentaient les rois.'[398] Likewise, Wilkinson maintains that the large mastabas at Saqqara with their recessed niches 'proclaimed the status of the tomb owner, by emphasising his proximity to the ultimate source of power, the king'.[399]

One problem with such views is that we have no evidence that recessed niches were ever used to decorate royal palaces in early dynastic Egypt.[400] If they were a symbol of power, we have no reason to believe that this was exclusively royal in character, particularly since recessed niches are more widely attested as an architectural feature of non-royal monuments than royal ones, and their use may well pre-date the establishment of kingship in Egypt.[401] As Hendrickx has rightly observed, there is no reason to postulate competition between subject and ruler to account for the distinctive features of the large first dynasty mastabas at Saqqara. But neither are we justified in assuming that the right to incorporate such features in a tomb was a special privilege that only the king could grant.

Perhaps too much has been made of the distinction between 'royal' Abydos, in particular Umm el-Qaab, and 'non-royal' Saqqara during the first dynasty. An alternative view of these two sites has been articulated by Wengrow, who comments, 'The overall impression is not of two separate necropoleis, defined in opposition to one another as royal versus non-royal. Rather, it is one of a single community of ritual actors, exercising extensive control over the land, its labour and its resources, drawing upon and enriching a common fund of material goods, knowledge, dramaturgical techniques, images, memories and presumably specific forms of ritual practice.'[402] In my opinion, this is a more plausible interpretation of the evidence than those that make

[397] Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos*, p. 60; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 175–6.
[398] Hendrickx, *Archéo-Nil* 18 (2008), p. 82.
[399] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 225. For similar views, see e.g. Stadelmann in Daoud, Bedier, and Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2, p. 370; Lacher in Friedman and Fiske (eds), *Egypt at its Origins* 3, p. 224 note 3; Kemp, *Ancient Egypt*, p. 55.
[400] See Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 239–40.
[401] Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, p. 224.
[402] Wengrow, *The Archaeology of Early Egypt*, pp. 257–8.

a sharp distinction between royal and non-royal spheres of funerary belief and practice with the former invariably dominating and influencing the character of the latter.

2.11. CONCLUSIONS

We know more about the afterlife beliefs of Egyptians during the period under survey than we do about those of prehistoric and predynastic Egyptians. Nevertheless, there is still relatively little that we can say with certainty about what they thought would happen to them after they died. The deceased could become *akhs*, or glorified spirits, and possessed *kas* as well. They required sustenance in the form of food, drink, and other commodities, which could be supplied to them by a range of different methods. In general, the needs of the dead in the hereafter do not seem to have been too dissimilar to those that they had in this life.

The tomb served as a sort of base for the deceased, but they also inhabited a place called the west. This was a region distinct from the land of the living which could only be reached by means of a journey, but it is not clear whether it was the cemetery itself or a separate 'land of the dead'. There is no compelling evidence for belief in a celestial abode of the dead in the period of our survey.

There were now supernatural beings with whom the deceased hoped to interact in the hereafter. Probably the most important were Anubis and a deity called Khentiamentiu, 'Foremost of the westerners'. It is possible, however, that the latter is simply an epithet referring to the former or to another god rather than the name of an independent divinity. Other deities with whom the deceased hoped to interact include Re, Ptah, and one called 'the great god'. The primary form of interaction envisaged was to be *imakh* in the presence of one or more of these deities, a status that guaranteed that the god would look after the dead person and supply his needs in the afterlife. This status could be attained with divine assistance. The role of Anubis here is especially prominent. In a sense, he already performs the function of *psychopompos*, conducting the deceased to the afterlife, as he regularly does in later periods of Egyptian history.

It is not clear whether good conduct in this world was seen as a prerequisite for interaction with deities in the next one during the period under survey. The earliest explicit statements linking the two occur in texts of sixth dynasty date. In an inscription from the tomb of Werirenptah at Saqqara (mid- to late fifth dynasty), the wish is expressed that the tomb owner might travel upon the beautiful roads on which the *imakhu* and the righteous travel and dwell in peace in the presence of the great god. In texts of later periods, the deceased are declared to be righteous (*mꜣʿ-ḫrw*) after undergoing an assessment of their conduct while alive. So perhaps the concept of a general judgement of the dead already existed at this time. But we are not in a position to say what form this may have taken or by whom it may have been conducted.

Texts and representations of our period attest to a number of different rituals that were intended to ensure the transition of the dead from this world to the next. These

include rites known from later periods as well, for instance, the Ritual of Opening the Mouth and *sꜣḫ.w* or glorifications. In addition, we have evidence of other rituals for which there are no later analogues, the purpose of which is not always clear. Our survey provided no evidence that the form or shape of tombs themselves was believed to play a role in restoring their occupants to new life. In particular, the view that pyramids and tumuli, whether subterranean or visible above the surface, represented the primeval mound, supposedly the source of all life, and thus assisted in the resurrection of those buried in or beneath them, was found to be without foundation.

As far as one can judge, there is no evidence that the Egyptians of our period believed that the social structure of this world would be mirrored in the next one. Burial of members of the same family in a single tomb need not imply a belief that the family unit would be preserved in the afterlife. Nor are subsidiary burials associated with the tombs of kings or other high-ranking individuals proof that the bond between them and the subordinates interred around them was supposed to be maintained in the hereafter. They may have been status markers to impress the living instead. Undoubtedly, the Egyptians imagined a communal afterlife, involving groups like the *imakhu* which the deceased aspired to join. However, these are never described as bodies owing allegiance to a particular ruler or official, so affiliation of this sort cannot have been a very significant factor in determining their membership.

The chief context in which the living and the dead interacted with each other during the period of our survey was the offering cult, in which the former provided for the material needs of the latter. Other forms of interaction may have taken place during rituals performed in cultic enclosures or royal pyramid complexes, but the evidence for this is far from certain. Just as the living cared for the dead, the latter were thought to be able to perform certain favours for the former, like interceding on their behalf before the gods. Relations between the living and the dead were not always envisaged as being harmonious, however. Visitors to a tomb might enter it in a state of impurity, or even seek to violate it, and in return the tomb owner might threaten them with litigation or some other form of retribution.

We have considerable evidence that burial practices and customs varied from one part of Egypt to another during the period of our survey. But custom is not the same as belief, so whether these differences in burial practice reflect different conceptions of the hereafter we cannot say. Some may be due to economic rather than religious factors. Nor is it clear whether there were different deities associated with the afterlife in different parts of the country. The problem of identifying these is complicated by the fact that we cannot always distinguish actual names of gods from epithets describing them or their functions. Does 'Foremost of the westerners', for example, denote a discrete divinity during our period, or is it simply a designation for a god like Anubis? Another complicating factor is that the names of deities associated with the afterlife at this time are sometimes written solely with ideograms that can be read in more than one way, and we cannot always be certain which reading is correct.

Finally, we have found no evidence to support the widely held view that royal and non-royal expectations of the afterlife differed significantly during the period of our

survey. As we have seen, both kings and their subjects hoped to interact with divinities in the hereafter. Nor was evidence found to support the view that the royal sphere was the source of all innovation as far as ideas about and preparations for the afterlife were concerned. Relatively few innovations in this realm appear in the royal sphere first during the period under survey. Most make their initial appearance in the non-royal sphere, and several appear in both spheres more or less simultaneously. In a number of cases, beliefs or practices that are attested in one sphere first appear in the other only a short time thereafter, so the transfer of innovations from one sphere to the other could take place relatively swiftly. All this suggests that the boundaries between royal and non-royal spheres were less rigidly drawn than commonly supposed, and that there was a regular exchange of ideas between them, with innovation and borrowing on both sides.

Even on the non-royal side, new ideas about and preparations for the afterlife do not always appear in larger and wealthier tombs first. The use of hieroglyphic writing as a feature of tomb decoration is attested for the first time in the cemetery at Helwan, the burial place of lower-ranking Memphite officials, not across the river at Saqqara where those of higher rank were interred.[403] The Helwan slab reliefs show varying degrees of skill, the best being comparable to the finest royal work.[404] Those for whom they were made include sculptors, priests, scribes, carpenters, and shipwrights. Women possessed them as well as men.[405] This demonstrates that hieroglyphic writing was not the prerogative of the king and the male elite during our period, as is often claimed. Lower-ranking individuals had access to it as well, and may even have been the first to exploit its potential.

The modern view that royal expectations for the afterlife were grander than non-royal ones during the period covered by our survey is based primarily on the fact that royal tombs were larger and more elaborate than non-royal ones during this time. But we have found no evidence that there was any correlation between the size and cost of a tomb and its owner's expectations for the hereafter. As early as the predynastic period, even before the institution of kingship had come into being, there was already a considerable difference between more elaborate graves and humbler ones. But there are no grounds for thinking that this reflects a difference in what their occupants thought would happen to them after they died. Rather, those with access to more resources could afford larger burial places. The same is true in the period under survey. With the establishment of the Egyptian monarchy, kings, by virtue of their position in the social and political hierarchy, controlled more resources than anyone else and so were in a position to construct the largest tombs. That some rulers, notably the kings of the first dynasty, did not feel compelled to do so, is further proof that an individual's ambitions for the afterlife were not constrained by the dimensions of the monument in which he was buried.

[403] See section 2.2.1. [404] Köhler and Jones, *Helwan 2*, p. 20. [405] Ibid., pp. 81 and 96.

3

Unreading the Pyramid Texts. So Who is Osiris?

Having surveyed the evidence for Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife prior to the earliest appearance of Osiris in the historical record, we are now in a position to examine the circumstances of his emergence as the most important god of the dead in ancient Egypt. An awareness of pre-existing funerary beliefs and practices supplies the essential background and context for our further investigations. In this chapter, we will focus on two questions. How and when did belief in Osiris originate, and what is the nature of the relationship envisaged between him and the deceased in our earliest sources for this belief?

3.1. INDIRECT EVIDENCE FOR OSIRIS PRIOR TO HIS EARLIEST ATTESTATION IN THE WRITTEN RECORD?

Some assume that the cult of Osiris always existed. Nuzzolo, for example, claims that he was worshipped from the very beginning of Egyptian history, and had a central position in every kind of funerary cult.[1] According to Scharff, Osiris was venerated as a god of vegetation in the eastern delta as early as the predynastic period.[2] Bietak also traces the deity's worship back to this period, at which time he believes it may have been influenced by Asiatic cults.[3] However, none of these authors offers any evidence in support of his view.[4] Others have postulated that the cult of the god already

[1] M. Nuzzolo, 'Sun Temples and Kingship in the Ancient Egyptian Kingdom', in J.-C. Goyon and C. Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 2 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2007), p. 1409.

[2] A. Scharff, *Die Ausbreitung des Osiriskultes in der Frühzeit und während des Alten Reiches* (Munich, 1948), p. 23.

[3] M. Bietak, 'Zur Herkunft des Seth von Avaris', *Ägypten und Levante* 1 (1990), p. 9.

[4] For others who assume the existence of Osiris long before he begins to appear in the written record, see references cited in R. Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods: The Evolution of the Divine Classifier in the Old Kingdom* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 106–7; A. Forgeau, *Horus-fils-d'Isis: La jeunesse d'un dieu* (Cairo, 2010), p. 17.

existed prior to his initial appearance in the historical record on the basis of evidence like the following.

3.1.1. Symbols and attributes associated with Osiris in later periods

Two objects of ivory were discovered by Saad in a first dynasty tomb at Helwan. He interpreted these as representations of the *djed*-pillar and therefore symbols of Osiris.[5] Likewise, Dodson and Ikram have identified *djed*-pillars depicted in wall friezes in the pyramid complex of Djoser at Saqqara as symbols of that king's union with Osiris.[6] On a statue base of Djoser from the same complex, this pillar alternates with the *tit*-symbol, sometimes called the Isis knot. Radwan sees a reference to Osiris here as well.[7] The difficulty with these interpretations is that the *djed*-pillar is not explicitly associated with Osiris until much later in Egyptian history, in the New Kingdom. Prior to that, it is an attribute of other deities.[8] Thus it cannot be used on its own as evidence for belief in Osiris. The same applies to the *atef*-crown, often worn by Osiris in later representations and thus seen by some as a specifically Osirian attribute, but which is first attested in the titulary of the fourth dynasty ruler Snefru as the headgear of the Horus falcon.[9]

Four poles arranged in a rectangle with traces of matting inside it were discovered on the floor of one of the chambers in mastaba S2498 at Saqqara, which has been dated to the second dynasty. Quantities of grain in the husk were found both inside and outside the rectangle.[10] The excavator suggested that this may have been an early version of the later Osiris bed.[11] The object in question was a wooden frame supporting an effigy of the god made of earth in which barley was planted. The germination of the barley was linked to the resurrection of Osiris. The grain in and around the rectangle in mastaba S2498 may likewise have been intended to facilitate the renewal of the tomb owner's life, but there is no reason to assume that its deposit there implied belief in a specific divinity, as others have already pointed out.[12] The practice could have arisen without reference to any divine prototype, given that the link between freshly sprouting grain and new life is such an obvious one.

[5] Z. Saad, *Royal Excavations at Saqqara and Helwan (1941–1945)* (Cairo, 1947), p. 27 and plate 14b.

[6] A. Dodson and S. Ikram, *The Tomb in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2008), p. 142.

[7] A. Radwan, 'Step Pyramids', in Z. Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids* (Cairo, 2003), pp. 89–91.

[8] See J.G. Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult* (Leiden, 1980), p. 41; H. Altenmüller, 'Djed-Pfeiler', in W. Helck and E. Otto (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1975), p. 1102.

[9] K. Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter* (Leipzig, 1930), p. 81; A. Abubakr, *Untersuchungen über die ägyptischen Kronen* (Glückstadt, Hamburg, and New York, 1937), p. 18, Abb.17. For other deities who wear the crown, see ibid., pp. 20–1; Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, p. 239.

[10] See J. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara (1912–1914): Archaic Mastabas* (Cairo, 1923), pp. 10 and 45 with plate 25.2.

[11] Ibid., p. 1.

[12] See A. Scharff, 'Frühe Vorstufen zum "Kornosiris"', *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 21–3 (1947), pp. 38–9; Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, pp. 169–70.

3.1.2. Deities and cities associated with Osiris in later periods

Some Egyptologists think that early representations of deities who were associated with Osiris in later periods constitute evidence of belief in him at the time that they were carved or sculpted, even if these pre-date the oldest references to that god. Fragments of relief from Heliopolis, dating to the reign of the third dynasty king Djoser, preserve parts of two seated deities, one of whom is clearly labelled as Seth.[13] Some have identified these as the remains of a representation of the Heliopolitan Ennead sitting in three rows and assume, on that basis, that Osiris was among the divinities shown in the now-missing portion of the relief.[14] Morenz, however, has pointed out that this could equally well be a different group of deities, possibly a forerunner of the Ennead, and thus not necessarily including Osiris.[15] The god Seth himself is attested as early as the first dynasty, at which time there is no evidence for the existence of the divine corporation of Heliopolis.[16]

References to cities closely associated with Osiris in conjunction with each other might also be considered as possible evidence for belief in the god prior to the first attestations of his name. Abydos in Upper Egypt and Busiris in the delta are two such cities. Both are identified as the burial place of Osiris in Egyptian tradition, and the deity frequently bears the epithets 'lord of Abydos' and 'lord of Busiris'. In later periods, the deceased hoped to voyage to these two places to participate in the festivals celebrated for Osiris there.[17] A tomb inscription of the fourth dynasty requests that the offering formula be recited for its occupant in Abydos and Busiris, among other places.[18] Since it is mainly in connection with Osiris that the two cities in question are linked together, is this an early example of a deceased person wishing to share in the offerings presented to the god in those cult centres? Or is the association of Osiris with Abydos and Busiris a later development?

Nuzzolo has suggested that boat pits found near the pyramid of Neferirkare and the pyramid temple of Reneferef at Abusir may have been intended to permit those fifth dynasty rulers to voyage to Abydos to see Osiris.[19] Some think that boat burials associated with earlier tombs were supposed to allow their occupants to undertake

[13] See L. Morenz, 'Die Götter und ihr Redetext: Die ältest-belegte Sakral-Monumentalisierung von Textlichkeit auf Fragmenten der Zeit des Djoser aus Heliopolis', in H. Beinlich, J. Hallof, H. Hussy, and C. von Pfeil (eds), *5. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung, Würzburg, 23.–26. September 1999* (Wiesbaden, 2002), pp. 137–58.

[14] e.g. Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, pp. 118–20; J. Zeidler, 'Zur Etymologie des Gottesnamens Osiris', *SAK* 28 (2000), p. 313 note 28; Radwan in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, p. 90.

[15] Morenz in Beinlich, Hallof, Hussy, and von Pfeil (eds), *5. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung*, pp. 146–7.

[16] See M. Smith, 'The Reign of Seth: Perspectives from the First Millennium BCE', in L. Bareš, F. Coppens, and K. Smoláriková (eds), *Egypt in Transition: Social and Religious Development of Egypt in the First Millennium BCE* (Prague, 2010), p. 396.

[17] See M. Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)* (Oxford, 2005), p. 151, and references cited there; section 4.12.5.

[18] See section 2.8.1.

[19] Nuzzolo in Goyon and Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 2, p. 1409.

this voyage as well.[20] But explicit evidence for the so-called 'Abydosfahrt' does not appear until the Middle Kingdom,[21] so in the absence of any other indication, there is no reason to connect these vessels with either Osiris or Abydos.

3.1.3. Architectural features

Architectural features of temples, pyramids, and tombs have sometimes been cited as proof for the existence of belief in Osiris in periods pre-dating his actual appearance in the historical record. We consider three examples in this and the following paragraphs. Allen has suggested that the fourth dynasty king Shepseskaf's abandonment of the pyramid form in favour of the mastaba for his burial place reflects an Osirian conception of the afterlife. This tomb introduced what was to become the standard arrangement of chambers in later pyramids of the fifth and sixth dynasties that were inscribed with Pyramid Text spells mentioning Osiris. According to Allen, the chief components of this were the burial chamber, representing the Osirian underworld, and the antechamber, representing the horizon. He claims that, since the layout of the rooms in the mastaba of Shepseskaf provides the model for that of the later inscribed pyramids, this conception must have already existed in that king's reign, even though the walls of the chambers in his tomb are uninscribed.[22]

Billing has drawn attention to an architectural feature found in royal pyramids from the reign of the fourth dynasty ruler Menkaure onwards, viz. a corridor chamber at the point where the descending passage becomes horizontal.[23] The corridor chamber of the sixth dynasty king Pepi I is inscribed with a series of Pyramid Text spells (539–548) which Billing associates with the later *Stundenwachen* ritual, a vigil conducted over the corpse of Osiris that was subsequently adapted for the benefit of deceased humans. He suggests that the chamber in question, and the uninscribed corridor chambers of earlier pyramids as well, may have been venues for the performance of an ancestor or early version of that ritual.[24] Since the pyramid of Menkaure was the first to incorporate such

[20] See e.g. M. Verner, 'Funerary Boats of Neferirkare and Raneferef', in U. Luft (ed.), *The Intellectual Heritage of Egypt: Studies Presented to László Kákosy by Friends and Colleagues on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday* (Budapest, 1992), p. 601; A. Radwan, 'Ein Jenseitsboot der 1. Dynastie aus Abusir—Teil 1', in E.-M. Engel, V. Müller, and U. Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand: Streiflichter aus Ägyptens Geschichte zu Ehren von Günter Dreyer* (Wiesbaden, 2008), p. 566.

[21] See H. Altenmüller, 'Abydosfahrt', in Helck and Otto (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1, pp. 42–7; section 4.12.2.

[22] J. Allen, 'Why a Pyramid? Pyramid Religion', in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, pp. 24–7.

[23] N. Billing, 'The Corridor Chamber: An Investigation of the Function and Symbolism of an Architectural Element in the Old Kingdom Pyramids', in J.-C. Goyon and C. Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2007), pp. 183–93; N. Billing, 'Monumentalizing the Beyond: Reading the Pyramid before and after the Pyramid Texts', *SAK* 40 (2011), pp. 57 and 64.

[24] Billing in Goyon and Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1, pp. 192–3. R. Stadelmann, 'The Pyramids of the Fourth Dynasty', in Hawass (ed.), *The Treasures of the*

a room, Billing sees this as possible evidence for the existence of Osirian belief as early as that king's reign.[25]

The majority of the documents in the archive of the funerary complex of the fifth dynasty ruler Neferirkare at Abusir date to the reigns of Djedkare Izezi and Unis.[26] One particular text makes reference to three seated statues of the deceased king, the first depicting him with the crown of Upper Egypt, the second with the crown of Lower Egypt, and the third wearing a *nemes*-headcloth and holding the crook and flail.[27] Some claim that the last depicts the king in the form of Osiris.[28] It has been argued that the statues in question, along with two others, stood in the five niches in the rear part of the king's pyramid temple with the one showing him as Osiris in the central niche.[29] Such niches are a feature of other pyramid temples as well, including that of the Fourth Dynasty king Khafre, and there are some who believe that there too the central and largest niche contained a statue depicting the king in the form of Osiris.[30]

In each of these instances, an architectural feature of a monument has been cited as evidence for belief in Osiris on the basis of texts that are only found in or relate to later examples of that feature. The earlier examples themselves provide no actual evidence of any Osirian connection. Instead this has been projected back in time on the assumption that architectural features which appear to have such a connection in later periods must have possessed them in earlier ones as well, a somewhat risky procedure.

Nor is the evidence for Osirian connections in the later examples of these features always as certain as one would like. As we have seen, the idea that the burial chamber of the mastaba of Shepseskaf represents an Osirian underworld is based upon the view that the burial chambers in the inscribed pyramids of the fifth and sixth dynasties were interpreted as such by the Egyptians, a view that has now been discredited.[31] Likewise the idea that the central niche of the five in the rear part of the pyramid temple of Khafre contained a statue showing him as Osiris is based on the assumption that a

Pyramids, p. 134, likewise suggests that the chambers in the pyramid of Menkaure may attest to an Osirian conception of the afterlife, but for no apparent reason other than the fact that they are underground.

[25] Billing in Goyon and Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 1, p. 193.

[26] See P. Posener-Kriéger and J. L. de Cenival, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Fifth Series: The Abusir Papyri* (London, 1968), pp. xv–xvi.

[27] Ibid., plates 4 and 4a.

[28] See e.g. P. Posener-Kriéger, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakaï (Les papyrus d'Abousir)* 1 (Cairo, 1976), p. 55.

[29] P. Posener-Kriéger, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakaï (Les papyrus d'Abousir)* 2 (Cairo, 1976), pp. 501–2 and 544–5; M. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids* (London, 1997), pp. 125 and 235.

[30] e.g. Posener-Kriéger, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakaï (Les papyrus d'Abousir)* 2, p. 545. For a sceptical view, see Scharff, *Die Ausbreitung des Osiriskultes in der Frühzeit und während des Alten Reiches*, p. 42 note 81. The latter also dismisses as speculation a view advocated in U. Hölscher, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Chephren* (Leipzig, 1912), pp. 27–8, according to which twelve additional statues showing Khafre as Osiris once stood along the walls of the open court of his pyramid temple in front of the five niches. Hölscher himself admits (ibid., p. 27 note 1) that there is no evidence for such statues in the Old Kingdom.

[31] See section 2.1.4.

similar statue stood in the central niche of the pyramid temple of Nerferirkare, showing that king in Osirian form, wearing a *nemes*-headcloth and holding a crook and flail. But the papyrus that mentions the statue in question does not say where it was erected. What sort of statues the niches in Neferirkare's pyramid temple may have contained is unknown.[32] Furthermore, the *nemes*-headcloth, crook, and flail are all attested as items of royal regalia before we have any firm evidence for belief in Osiris. They are royal, not Osirian, attributes in the first instance. Osiris only acquires them because he is said to be a king. Thus there are no grounds for claiming that a statue of a ruler with these attributes must portray him as that god.[33]

3.1.4. Alternative iconographies and names for Osiris?

Various iconographic forms have been attributed to Osiris by those seeking to trace existence of belief in him back to the earliest periods of Egyptian history. Westendorf has argued that representations of a panther-like creature on predynastic palettes could depict Osiris, who he thinks was originally a female rather than a male deity.[34] The same author would see in the famous seated statue of Khafre protected by a falcon god found in his valley temple at Giza a portrait of that king as Osiris, which he refers to as 'Osiris Chephren'.[35] But in neither case is there any compelling evidence to support these identifications.[36]

Some believe that, initially at least, Osiris was held in such awe that his name could not be mentioned at all, thus accounting for the absence of references to him in our earliest written sources.[37] Another view is that these sources may refer to him obliquely, using epithets like *ḫnty ʾImnty.w*, 'Foremost of the westerners',[38] *nṯr*, 'god',[39] *nṯr ʿ*,

[32] For the suggestion that the five niches in the royal pyramid temple may have related to the five phyles or the five names in the king's titulary, see Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 125. The niches are normally found in association with a similar number of storerooms. As S. Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs: The Culture of Life and Death* (Chichester, 2011), p. 58, notes, some private tombs of the Old Kingdom have five storerooms as well, so there is nothing specifically royal about these.

[33] Cf. M. Verner, *Sons of the Sun: Rise and Decline of the Fifth Dynasty* (Prague, 2014), pp. 138–9.

[34] W. Westendorf, *Altägyptische Darstellungen des Sonnenlaufes auf der abschüssigen Himmelsbahn* (Berlin, 1966), pp. 2–4; W. Westendorf, 'Zu Frühformen von Osiris und Isis', *Göttinger Miszellen* 25 (1977), pp. 95–111, especially pp. 103–6.

[35] Ibid., pp. 104–5 and 112, Abb. 1.

[36] Compare Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, pp. 99–106.

[37] Ibid., pp. 95–6. Cf. A. Bolshakov, 'Princess *Ḥm.t-Rʿ(w)*: The First Mention of Osiris?', *CdE* 67 (1992), p. 203 note 1; W. Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel* (Glückstadt, 1968), p. 288; H. Hays, 'The Death of the Democratization of the Afterlife', in N. Strudwick and H. Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC* (Oxford, 2011), p. 123.

[38] T. Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt* (London, 1999), pp. 288 and 292.

[39] E. MacArthur and E. Teeter, 'Votive Plaque', in E. Teeter (ed.), *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization* (Chicago, 2011), p. 214. Cf. H. Fischer, 'Marginalia II', *Göttinger Miszellen* 128 (1992), pp. 72–5.

'great god',[40] *bity*, 'king of Lower Egypt',[41] or *iry s.t iry.t*, 'he who belongs to the made bed'.[42] But the first three can be attributed to other deities as well as Osiris,[43] so there is no guarantee that a given instance of one of these epithets refers to him rather than one of them. The fourth is a royal rather than specifically Osirian title, while the idea that the fifth relates to Osiris is purely speculative, since the epithet *iry s.t iry.t* is a totally modern reconstruction and is not actually attested in any ancient Egyptian source. Nor is the verb *ir* used in connection with beds in Egyptian with the sense of preparing a bed so that someone can sleep in it.

3.1.5. Evidence for the early existence of Osiris from later sources?

Finally, some Egyptian texts of later periods appear to project the existence of the cult of Osiris into much earlier times. According to a stela found in the temple of Isis mistress of the pyramids at Giza, the fourth dynasty ruler Khufu found the sanctuary of that goddess next to the temple of the sphinx, to the northwest of the temple of Osiris lord of Rosetau, and built his pyramid and that of his daughter Henutsen beside it.[44] This implies that there was already a temple of Osiris at Giza before Khufu undertook any construction work there. But the reference to this temple is almost certainly an anachronism, as are other features of the account on the stela. There were no temples dedicated to Isis or the sphinx at Giza in Khufu's reign. The sphinx had not even been built at the time when he was king. The date of the stela is disputed, but Zivie-Coche has cited cogent reasons for assigning it to the early Saite Period, even though it purports to be much older.[45] Whoever composed the text evidently described the topography of Giza as he knew it, not as it was in the time of Khufu. The landmarks that he mentions are those that were prominent in his own day and age, not in the period when the events he relates are supposed to have taken place.

[40] Cf. Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 50–1; Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 291–2.

[41] J. Kahl, '*nsw* und *bit*: die Anfange', in Engel, Müller, and Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand*, pp. 311–12.

[42] H. Altenmüller, 'Etappen des Mythos: Vom Ikon zum Epitheton, vom Epitheton zum Götternamen', in M. Bárta and J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Prague, 2000), pp. 310–16; H. Altenmüller, 'Zum Ursprung von Isis und Nephthys', *SAK* 27 (1999), pp. 5–7; H. Altenmüller, 'Zu Isis und Osiris', in M. Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen: Festschrift für Rolf Gundlach* (Wiesbaden, 1996), pp. 9–15.

[43] See sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.5.

[44] Cairo JE 2091. See C. Zivie-Coche, *Giza au premier millénaire: Autour du temple d'Isis dame des pyramides* (Boston, 1991), pp. 219–20; K. Jansen-Winkeln, *Inschriften der Spätzeit IV: Die 26. Dynastie* 2 (Wiesbaden, 2014), p. 763.

[45] Zivie-Coche, *Giza au premier millénaire*, p. 221.

3.1.6. Summary of indirect evidence for Osiris prior to his earliest attestation in the written record

The examples discussed in section 3.1 are only a selection of those that could be cited to illustrate the sorts of evidence that have been adduced for belief in Osiris in those periods of Egyptian history prior to the first appearance of the god's name in texts and the first unambiguous representations of him. In no case is this really sufficient to prove the existence of such a belief. Therefore the view adopted here will be that only when we begin to find references to Osiris by name in our sources can we be confident of his entry into the pantheon of ancient Egyptian deities. We should not, however, rule out the possibility that belief in him did exist in earlier periods. The most we can say is that we have no convincing evidence that it did at present.

3.2. THE EARLIEST ATTESTATION OF THE NAME OF OSIRIS ON A ROYAL MONUMENT

3.2.1. The pyramid temple of Djedkare Izezi

So when does the first reference to Osiris by name occur? The first attestation of the god's name on a royal monument is preserved on a relief fragment from the pyramid temple of the fifth dynasty king Djedkare Izezi at Saqqara.[46] This occurs in a label to a scene which may preserve part of a depiction of the god as well.[47] Sethe restored the name of Osiris in a damaged inscription on one of the walls of the pyramid temple of an earlier fifth dynasty ruler, Sahure, at Abusir. All that is preserved of the name in question is the upper part of a seated god determinative (Gardiner Sign-List A40).[48] The restoration was based on Sethe's belief that Osiris was the only divine name determined with this sign in the Old Kingdom, a view which we now know to be mistaken, so this example can be discounted.[49]

[46] For a photograph, see Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, frontispiece. He discusses the piece ibid., pp. 236–7.

[47] For debate about whether the figure in question is Osiris or another deity, see D. Lorton, 'Considerations on the Origin and Name of Osiris', *Varia Aegyptiaca* 1 (1985), pp. 114 and 122 note 4; B. Begelsbacher-Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches im Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV. und V. Dynastie* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1981), p. 123 note 4; M. Eaton-Krauss, 'The Earliest Representation of Osiris?', *Varia Aegyptiaca* 3 (1987), pp. 233–6.

[48] See L. Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Śaḥw-reʿ* 2 (Leipzig, 1913), pp. 87–8 and plate 12.

[49] See Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 73 and 79–80.

3.2.2. The pyramids of Unis and subsequent kings

After the lone instance from Djedkare's pyramid temple, the next earliest examples of the name of Osiris on royal monuments are found in the Pyramid Texts. The oldest exemplars of these are inscribed in the pyramid of Unis, the last ruler of the fifth dynasty. They are also found in the pyramids of kings Teti, Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II of the sixth dynasty, as well as in those of a number of sixth dynasty queens. The latest Old Kingdom specimens of Pyramid Texts are those in the pyramid of the eighth dynasty king Ibi.[50] Some have claimed that fragments of Pyramid Texts are attested even earlier than the reign of Unis, in the pyramid temples of the fifth dynasty rulers Sahure, Neferirkare, and Niuserre.[51] However, the fragments in question are not of Pyramid Texts but rather of the canonical offering list.[52] This is already attested in private tombs of the fourth and fifth dynasties,[53] so if one wished to claim the lists of items preserved in the aforementioned royal pyramid temples as Pyramid Texts one would have to acknowledge that the earliest examples of the latter corpus are not royal but non-royal.

3.2.3. The date of composition of the Pyramid Texts

When were the spells that comprise the Pyramid Texts actually composed? A few would date their composition as early as the predynastic or the early dynastic period, but evidence to support this is lacking.[54] The fact that pyramids are only rarely

[50] For comprehensive lists of Old Kingdom sources for the Pyramid Texts, with bibliography, see A. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom: Philological Aspects of a Continuous Tradition in Egyptian Mortuary Literature* 1 (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2013), pp. xxvii and 17–20; A. Morales, 'Pyramid Texts as Ritual Icons: Mechanisms of Monumentalization and Adaptation in the Chambers of the Old Kingdom Queens', in J. Quack and D. Luft (eds), *Schrift und Material: Praktische Verwendung religiöser Text- und Bildträger als Artefakte im Alten Ägypten* (Tübingen, forthcoming).

[51] See J. Baines, 'Modelling Sources, Processes, and Locations of Early Mortuary Texts', in S. Bickel and B. Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre: Textes des Pyramides & Textes des Sarcophages* (Cairo, 2004), pp. 21–2, followed by J. Quack, 'Redaktion und Kodifizierung im spätzeitlichen Ägypten: Der Fall des Totenbuches', in J. Schaper (ed.), *Die Textualisierung der Religion* (Tübingen, 2009), p. 12. A. Morales, 'Iteration, Innovation und Dekorum im Opferlisten des Alten Reichs', *ZÄS* 142 (2015), p. 56, describes these as 'non-narrative' versions of Pyramid Text spells.

[52] M. Smith, 'Democratization of the Afterlife', in J. Dieleman and W. Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2009), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, pp. 8–9; Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 119–20 and 129–30; H. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1 (Leiden and Boston, 2012), pp. 86–9; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 96–7 note 259 and 451–2 note 1301; Morales, *ZÄS* 142 (2015), p. 59; A. Morales, 'From Voice to Wall: *Verschriftung* and *Verschriftlichung* in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts', in M. Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures: A Multidisciplinary View* (Berlin, 2016), pp. 79–85.

[53] Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, p. 9; section 2.2.1. Shorter precursors of this list are found in private tombs even earlier, as noted by Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*, pp. 85–92; Morales, *ZÄS* 142 (2015), pp. 59–61.

[54] Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 116–17; Morales in Quack and Luft (eds), *Schrift und Material* (forthcoming); Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*, p. 102 note 143.

mentioned in the Pyramid Texts has led some to conjecture that they must have been composed at a date anterior to the construction of the first funerary monuments of that type.[55] However, as Quack has shown, the real reason that these monuments are mentioned so rarely in them is that the Pyramid Texts, despite the name given to them by modern scholars, have no intrinsic connection with pyramids. They were not composed specifically for use inside or in association with them, but for recitation in other contexts, and some spells continued to be used in these other contexts long after pyramids had ceased to be built.[56]

A number of scholars maintain that there must have been a period during which the Pyramid Texts were transmitted orally before they were first set down in writing.[57] It is evident, nevertheless, that at least some Pyramid Text spells existed in written form prior to being carved on the walls of the pyramid of Unis.[58] That the versions of the spells inscribed on that monument are derived from earlier copies is demonstrated by passages where corrections and alterations have been made.[59] In Pyramid Text Spell 23, for instance, the word *nswt*, 'king', was carved originally but then replaced by the name of the pyramid's owner.[60] Thus a copy of the spell designed for an anonymous king must have existed before the text of Unis was inscribed. In Spell 215, an original *mn*, 'so and so', which should have been replaced by that king's name, was inadvertently left unaltered, indicating that the *Vorlage* of that spell was a copy intended for an anonymous non-royal person.[61]

Errors in copying show that the versions of the spells underlying the ones inscribed inside the pyramid of Unis were written in hieratic.[62] Evidently it was a considerable challenge to accommodate these to the spaces dictated by the pre-existing architectural design of the subterranean chambers of that king's monument. That the challenge had been successfully met by the end of the reign of Teti, Unis's successor, is shown by the fact that the texts inscribed in his pyramid are largely free from corrections and alterations of this sort.[63]

It is doubtful whether all Pyramid Text spells were originally composed for use in the cult of the dead. Some, for instance, may have originated in the temple cult of Osiris

[55] See e.g. B. Mathieu, 'La distinction entre Textes des Pyramides et Textes des Sarcophages est-elle légitime?', in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, p. 253.

[56] J. Quack, 'Bedeutungen von Pyramiden', *Sokar* 23 (2011), pp. 41–5.

[57] A. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom: Philological Aspects of a Continuous Tradition in Egyptian Mortuary Literature* 2 (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2013), pp. 653 and 817–19; Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*; C. Reintges, 'The Oral-Compositional Form of Pyramid Text Discourse', in F. Hagen, J. Johnston, W. Monkhouse, K. Piquette, J. Tait, and M. Worthington (eds), *Narratives of Egypt and the Ancient Near East: Literary and Linguistic Approaches* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2011), pp. 3–54.

[58] Cf. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, p. 705 note 2025.

[59] B. Mathieu, 'Modifications de texte dans le pyramide d'Ounas', *BIFAO* 96 (1996), pp. 289–311.

[60] Ibid., pp. 290–1.

[61] Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 131.

[62] Mathieu, *BIFAO* 96 (1996), p. 290; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 114.

[63] See B. Mathieu, 'Pyramides à textes et formules conjuratoires', in Y. Koenig (ed.), *La magie en Égypte: À la recherche d'une définition* (Paris, 2002), p. 188.

and were only later adapted for use in that of the deceased.[64] Others, it has been conjectured, may have been used by the living for their own benefit in certain circumstances. Proponents of this view cite the analogy of later Book of the Dead spells whose rubrics indicate that the living could profit from them as well as the deceased.[65] For most Pyramid Text spells, however, there is no evidence to suggest that they may have been employed in this way.[66] The major exception is the category of apotropaic anti-snake spells, some of which are known to have been used to protect the living from the bites of serpents and other venomous creatures in later periods.[67] But even if some Pyramid Text spells were originally designed for other purposes and only later adapted for use in the mortuary sphere, this does not tell us how long before that adaptation they were actually composed. In theory, the date of their composition need not be much earlier than the date of their initial appearance in written form inside the pyramid of Unis. Thus they do not provide evidence for belief in Osiris prior to the first references to that god in non-royal sources, to which we will turn our attention now.

3.3. THE EARLIEST ATTESTATION OF THE NAME OF OSIRIS ON A NON-ROYAL MONUMENT

3.3.1. Uncertainties in dating Old Kingdom mastabas

The problem of identifying the earliest attestation of the name of Osiris on a non-royal monument is more difficult than that of identifying the first example of it on a royal monument. It is one of the ironies of our investigation that whereas much of the dubious or ambiguous evidence for belief in the god that we have surveyed in section 3.1 can be dated fairly precisely, in a number of cases to a specific reign, there is still considerable uncertainty and disagreement among Egyptologists about the exact date of the earliest non-royal texts that mention Osiris explicitly. This is because the monuments from which they originate, Old Kingdom mastabas at Saqqara and Giza,

[64] For this possibility, see M. Smith, 'Whose Ritual? Osirian Texts and Texts Written for the Deceased in P. BM EA 10209: A Case Study', in B. Backes and J. Dieleman (eds), *Liturgical Texts for Osiris and the Deceased in Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt* (Wiesbaden, 2015), p. 177, and literature cited there.

[65] See e.g. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 45–51 and 202–3; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 82 and 125.

[66] As observed in Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, p. 13 note 34.

[67] For these spells, see Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 275–82; C. Leitz, 'Die Schlangensprüche in den Pyramidentexte', *Orientalia* 65 (1996), pp. 381–427; G. Sperveslage, 'Zu den Schlangensprüchen in den Pyramidentexte', *Sokar* 23 (2011), pp. 30–7; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 85 and 296; Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*, pp. 92–5 and 101–3.

are themselves only datable within rather broad limits.[68] A number of authors have stated that the name of Osiris first occurs in private tomb inscriptions from the reign of the fifth dynasty king Niuserre (*c.*2445–2421 BC).[69] Bolshakov, on the other hand, has maintained that 'there are no trustworthy records of Osiris' from the time of that monarch.[70] According to him and others, the god's name does not appear in private tomb inscriptions until the reign of Djedkare Izezi (*c.*2414–2375).[71] In the following paragraphs, we examine a few representative examples to illustrate the problems and uncertainties involved in dating this type of material.

3.3.2. The evidence of the tomb of Ptahshepses at Saqqara

One of the earliest references to Osiris from a non-royal monument occurs in the offering formula on an architrave from the tomb of Ptahshepses north of the Step Pyramid at Saqqara.[72] This man was born in the reign of Menkaure of the fourth dynasty (*c.*2532–2503) and served several successive kings thereafter.[73] The fact that Ptahshepses held the title of priest of Re in the solar temple of Niuserre (*ḥm-nṯr Rʿ m Šsp-ỉb-Rʿ*) shows that he survived until the foundation of that establishment.[74] According to one calculation, he may already have been as old as 69 at the time of Niuserre's accession.[75] If he was, and if the latter actually occupied the throne for more than 30

[68] For surveys of the various methods used to date Old Kingdom private tombs and related material, see M. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* 1 (Cairo, 1999), pp. 5–17; S. Seidlmayer, 'Stil und Statistik: Die Datierung dekorierter Gräber des Alten Reiches—Ein Problem der Methode', in J. Müller and A. Zimmermann (eds), *Archäologie und Korrespondenzanalyse: Beispiele, Fragen, Perspektiven* (Espelkamp, 1997), pp. 17–51; J. Swinton, *Dating the Tombs of the Egyptian Old Kingdom* (Oxford, 2014).

[69] e.g. Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, p. 44; B. van de Walle, *La chapelle funéraire de Neferirtenef* (Brussels, 1978), p. 24; K. Baer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom* (Chicago, 1960), p. 297; M. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* 2 (Cairo, 1999), p. 518; Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, p. 73; B. Mathieu, 'Mais qui est donc Osiris? Ou la politique sous le linceul de la religion', *ENiM* 3 (2010), p. 78; Fischer, *Göttinger Miszellen* 128 (1992), pp. 72 and 74 note 4; Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 121.

[70] Bolshakov, *CdE* 67 (1992), p. 203.

[71] See A. Bolshakov, 'Osiris in the Fourth Dynasty Again? The False Door of *Jntj*, MFA 31.781', in H. Győry (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Edith Varga: Le lotus qui sort de terre* (Budapest, 2001), p. 65; H. Kees, 'Das Eindringen des Osiris in die Pyramidentexte', in S. Mercer (ed.), *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary* 4 (New York, London, and Toronto, 1952), pp. 123–4; A. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants Including G 2084–2099, G 2230 + 2231, and G 2240* (Boston, 1995), p. 35.

[72] *PM* III², p. 464, no. 48. For the name of Osiris, see T.G.H. James, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae Etc.* 1² (London, 1961), plate 17 (upper), first line.

[73] For his biography, see P. Dorman, 'The Biographical Inscription of Ptahshepses from Saqqara: A Newly Identified Fragment', *JEA* 88 (2002), pp. 95–110; Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* 2, pp. 452–4.

[74] Dorman, *JEA* 88 (2002), p. 100. Ibid., p. 107, note 41, he wrongly gives the name of this temple as *S.t-ỉb-Rʿ*, which is actually the name of Neferirkare's solar temple.

[75] Ibid., pp. 109–10.

years as some have supposed,[76] then Ptahshepses is unlikely to have outlived him. Thus his tomb, or more specifically its decoration, must date to the reign of Niuserre, or so it has been argued.

There are, however, some problems with this argument. First, the idea that Ptahshepses was 69 years old at the start of Niuserre's reign is based on the assumption that some of the kings who occupied the throne between him and Menkaure ruled for more years than are actually attested for them at present; in particular, that Neferirkare reigned for 20 years and Reneferef for 11.[77] The first figure is based entirely on Manetho, since the year total after the presumed entry for Neferirkare in 3/19 of the Turin Canon is lost,[78] while the highest attested date for him in contemporary sources is year 10, 15, or 16, depending on one's reading and interpretation of the text in which it occurs.[79] The second figure is based on a restoration. All that is visible after the presumed entry for Reneferef in 3/21 of the Turin Canon is a stroke representing the numeral 1.[80] The year total could be restored as 11, but lower numbers, e.g. 3 or 4, are possible as well. The highest attested date for this king in contemporary sources is year 1 or 2.[81]

The attribution of a reign in excess of thirty years to Niuserre is equally problematic. All that is preserved after the presumed entry for that king in 3/22 of the Turin Canon is a 10 and a 1,[82] so he could have reigned no longer than eleven years. The restoration of this figure as 31 advocated by some is influenced by the reign of forty-four years assigned to Niuserre by Manetho,[83] as well as the fact that the king is known to have celebrated a *sed*-festival.[84] However, there is no evidence that such feasts were celebrated at thirty-year intervals during the fifth dynasty, as they were in later periods.[85] The highest attested dates for Niuserre in contemporary sources are 'year of the seventh occasion' and 'year after the seventh occasion'.[86] At one time it was believed that the latter meant he reigned for at least 14 or 15 years, but this interpretation has now been called into question.[87]

[76] For this estimate, see e.g. J. von Beckerath, *Chronologie des pharaonischen Ägypten* (Mainz am Rhein, 1997), pp. 154–5.

[77] See Dorman, *JEA* 88 (2002), p. 110.

[78] A. Gardiner, *The Royal Canon of Turin* (Oxford, 1987), plate 2.

[79] A. Spalinger, 'Dated Texts of the Old Kingdom', *SAK* 21 (1994), pp. 297–8; M. Verner, 'The System of Dating in the Old Kingdom', in H. Vymazalová and M. Bárta (eds), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt (The Third Millennium B.C.)* (Prague, 2008), p. 31; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 47–8; M. Verner, *Abusir III: The Pyramid Complex of Khentkaus* (Prague, 1995), pp. 43–5 and 176.

[80] Gardiner, *The Royal Canon of Turin*, plate 2.

[81] Verner in Vymazalová and Bárta (eds), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt (The Third Millennium B.C.)*, p. 32; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 56–8.

[82] Gardiner, *The Royal Canon of Turin*, plate 2.

[83] See von Beckerath, *Chronologie des pharaonischen Ägypten*, pp. 154–5.

[84] J. Nolan, 'Lunar Intercalations and "Cattle Counts" During the Old Kingdom: The Hebsed in Context', in Vymazalová and Bárta (eds), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt (The Third Millennium B.C.)*, pp. 55–8.

[85] See N. Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom* (London, 1985), p. 4.

[86] Verner in Vymazalová and Bárta (eds), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt (The Third Millennium B.C.)*, p. 32; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, p. 61.

[87] Verner in Vymazalová and Bárta (eds), *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt (The Third Millennium B.C.*), pp. 39–43; Nolan, ibid., pp. 44–60.

If Ptahshepses was younger than 69 at the start of the reign of Niuserre, and that king ruled for less than 30 years, it is not impossible that Ptahshepses survived into the reign of his successor Menkauhor, or even that of Djedkare Izezi. His tomb could have been decorated then and not earlier. Against this it might be argued that Ptahshepses served in the solar temples of three rulers of the fifth dynasty, Userkaf, Neferirkare, and Niuserre, and listed them all in his tomb inscriptions.[88] If he survived into the reign of Djedkare Izezi, why did he not mention the solar temple of Menkauhor (*ꜣḫ.t-Rʿ*) as well? The answer could be that he was not employed in that one. We know for a certainty that Ptahshepses lived during the reigns of Sahure, Shepseskare, and Reneferef, but there is no reference to their solar temples in his tomb inscriptions. To summarize, his tomb may have been decorated as early as the reign of Niuserre, but conclusive proof of this is lacking.

3.3.3. The evidence of the tomb of Ti at Saqqara

Other early references to Osiris from a non-royal monument occur in the tomb of Ti at Saqqara.[89] A case for dating this to the reigns of Niuserre and his predecessor Reneferef has been made by Verner.[90] As he notes, the latter, who was the elder son of Neferirkare, only had a short reign. The name of his solar temple, *Ḥtp-Rʿ*, is known, but no trace of it survives, and there is no record of it in the archives of the funerary temple of that king. The offerings delivered to Reneferef's pyramid temple originated from the funerary endowments of earlier kings, as far back as Snefru, the solar temple of his father, Neferirkare, the temple of Ptah south of his wall, the residence, and other sources.[91] Why were none provided by his own solar temple? Verner makes the plausible suggestion that the latter was established but did not survive beyond the lifetime of its founder. At the death of Reneferef, Niuserre took it over and adapted it for his own use. This could explain why an offering table combining the forms of *ḥtp* and *rʿ* hieroglyphs was discovered in the solar temple of Niuserre at Abu Ghurab.[92]

The solar temple of Reneferef is only mentioned in the tomb of Ti.[93] He served as the overseer of this institution, as well as of the solar temples of Sahure, Neferirkare, and

[88] See Dorman, *JEA* 88 (2002), p. 100.

[89] *PM* III², pp. 468–9, no. 60. For the name of Osiris, see L. Épron and F. Daumas, *Le tombeau de Ti* 1 (Cairo, 1939), plate 39; H. Wild, *Le tombeau de Ti* 2 (Cairo, 1953), plate 102; H. Wild, *Le tombeau de Ti* 3 (Cairo, 1966), plates 182 and 184.

[90] M. Verner, 'Remarques sur le temple solaire *Ḥtp-Rʿ* et la date du mastaba de Ti', *BIFAO* 87 (1987), pp. 293–7. Swinton, *Dating the Tombs of the Egyptian Old Kingdom*, p. 141, assigns the tomb to the reign of Djedkare Izezi on stylistic grounds, but her dating ignores the evidence presented by Verner. Nor does she consider the possibility that its decoration may have extended over more than one reign.

[91] H. Vymazalová, 'The Economic Connection Between the Royal Cult in the Pyramid Temples and the Sun Temples in Abusir', in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 296–7; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 100, 119–30, and 212.

[92] See Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 152; Verner, *Sons of the Sun,* p. 212.

[93] Ibid., pp. 211–12, correcting reports that the solar temple of Reneferef is also mentioned in titles on two sealings from the reign of Niuserre.

Niuserre. The name *Ḥtp-Rʿ* occurs four times in his tomb.[94] As Verner notes, this means that at least some parts of it were being decorated while Reneferef was still on the throne, since that king's solar temple does not seem to have continued in operation after his death. The parts in question include Ti's northern (right) false door, on which the name of Osiris and the name of Reneferef's solar temple are inscribed side by side.[95] The fact that the solar temple of Niuserre is mentioned elsewhere in the tomb indicates that its decoration must have continued into the first part of that king's reign. But since this temple's name only occurs once, unlike those of the other solar temples with which Ti was associated, the scene in which it is mentioned probably belongs to a later phase of the monument's decoration.[96] Thus, the grounds for attributing the decoration of at least some parts of this tomb to the reign of Niuserre are stronger than was the case with the tomb of Ptahshepses, while other parts, e.g. the northern false door, are evidently even earlier.[97]

3.3.4. The tomb of Hemetre and the false door of Inti from Giza

A few occurrences of the name of Osiris have been dated even earlier than the reign of Reneferef, but these earlier datings have not gone unchallenged. One occurs in the offering formula in the tomb of a princess called Hemetre at Giza.[98] Some date this to the late fourth dynasty or early fifth dynasty, while others assign it to the middle of the latter dynasty.[99] A false door belonging to a woman called Inti, also from Giza, mentions the god twice.[100] This too has been dated to the fourth dynasty or early fifth dynasty by some, although others assign it to the mid-fifth dynasty or even early sixth dynasty.[101]

The controversies over the dating of the false door and tomb highlight the problems one faces in trying to use evidence which is not easily assignable to a specific reign or even dynasty to trace developments in the sphere of Egyptian religion. In the case of the former, the earlier date advocated by some is based entirely on stylistic grounds, in particular the high raised relief in which its decoration is carved.[102] Specific features of

[94] Épron and Daumas, *Le tombeau de Ti* 1, plates 37 and 44; Wild, *Le tombeau de Ti* 3, plate 183.
[95] Cf. ibid., plates 182–3.
[96] For the scene in question, see Épron and Daumas, *Le tombeau de Ti* 1, plate 37.
[97] For the possibility that work on the actual construction (as opposed to the decoration) of Ti's mastaba began as early as the reign of Neferirkare, see J. Auenmüller, 'Bemerkungen zur Datierung der Mastaba des Ti in Saqqara', *Göttinger Miszellen* 240 (2014), pp. 13 and 15.
[98] See S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza* 6/3 (Cairo, 1950), p. 48, figure 36, and plate 23A.
[99] For discussion, see Bolshakov, *CdE* 67 (1992), pp. 203–10; Bolshakov in Győry (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Edith Varga*, pp. 77–80, both with references to earlier literature. Cf. Forgeau, *Horus-fils-d'Isis*, pp. 17 and 101, and Swinton, *Dating the Tombs of the Egyptian Old Kingdom*, pp. 137 and 147, both of whom prefer an earlier date.
[100] See P. Der Manuelian, 'A Case of Prefabrication at Giza? The False Door of Inti', *JARCE* 35 (1998), pp. 115–27.
[101] See Bolshakov in Győry (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Edith Varga*, pp. 65–76.
[102] See Der Manuelian, *JARCE* 35 (1998), pp. 117–19.

the decorative programme figure prominently in discussions of the date of the tomb as well, although the diagnostic value of these is disputed.[103] Any dating based mainly on stylistic criteria is bound to be problematic. The argument that a tomb or object originating from a tomb cannot be earlier than a certain date because its decoration includes a feature that is not attested before that date is a circular one, and proves nothing.

In the case of Hemetre's tomb, another contentious point is the nature of the owner's relationship with the fourth dynasty ruler Khafre (*c.*2558–2532 BC), which has a significant bearing on whether an earlier or a later dating should be preferred. The tomb of Hemetre is situated in the Central Field at Giza, in an area where the wives and children of that king were buried.[104] She herself is said to be the 'eldest king's daughter of his body'.[105] The names of the estates assigned to her, with the exception of one, incorporate the name of Khafre.[106] All this has led some to suppose that she was the daughter of that king and conclude that her tomb and its inscriptions cannot be later than the beginning of the fifth dynasty.

Bolshakov, however, while admitting that Hemetre was a princess, says there is no proof that Khafre was her father. He argues that her burial in the vicinity of other relatives of that king could be a later intrusive one. Even if her tomb is approximately contemporary with theirs, he maintains, this does not mean it was originally built for her and was decorated immediately after its construction. If her burial was secondary, the tomb's inscriptions, including the offering formula with its mention of Osiris, could have been added afterward. Furthermore, he denies that the incorporation of Khafre's name in those of the estates assigned to Hemetre has to mean that she was his immediate offspring. According to him, she could have been a more distant descendant and still have enjoyed their produce.[107]

3.3.5. Summary of evidence for the earliest attestation of the name of Osiris on a non-royal monument

With the evidence available at present, it is impossible to prove conclusively whether the earlier or the later dating of Hemetre's tomb and Inti's false door is correct. If the former is adopted, then the name of Osiris is first attested at the end of the fourth dynasty or the beginning of the fifth. If the latter is preferred, then the earliest attestations of this divine name are the ones from the tomb of Ti discussed in section 3.3.3. As we have seen, these are unlikely to postdate the reign of Reneferef. Whatever

[103] See e.g. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* 2, p. 517.
[104] Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* 1, pp. 223–6.
[105] Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* 2, p. 517.
[106] Ibid., p. 518.
[107] Bolshakov, *CdE* 67 (1992), pp. 204–6; Bolshakov in Győry (ed.), *Mélanges offerts à Edith Varga*, p. 78.

one's preference, it is reasonably certain that references to Osiris by name occur in non-royal funerary monuments before they appear in royal ones.

Is this significant? In my opinion, probably not. In section 2.10.2, we saw that in the early dynastic period and the first half of the Old Kingdom, considerably more ideas, rituals, and customs pertaining to the afterlife are attested in the non-royal sphere first than are attested in the royal one initially. The same applies to items of burial equipment and architectural features of tombs. Thus, it should not be surprising if the name of Osiris appears in private tomb inscriptions before it appears in royal ones.[108] But the fact that something is attested first in the non-royal sphere is no proof that this is where it originated, just as the fact that something is attested first in the royal sphere does not prove that it originated there. As argued in section 2.10.2, it is more likely that the boundary separating royal and non-royal spheres was sufficiently permeable to allow a mutual exchange of ideas between the two, with a considerable amount of both innovation and borrowing taking place on either side.

This view is supported by the fact that several of the phenomena relating to the afterlife that were examined in section 2.10.2 appear more or less simultaneously in both royal and non-royal spheres, while in a number of instances where a phenomenon is attested in one sphere first, it does not take long before we find it in the other as well. So already in the early dynastic period and the first half of the Old Kingdom, a pattern of relatively swift transfer of beliefs and practices from one sphere to the other is discernible. There is no reason why this should not have continued into the period that we are investigating now.

Our attempts to track the earliest appearances of Osiris in the historical record are hampered by the fact that we know so little about the lengths of the reigns of the individual kings who ruled during this period and consequently those of the dynasties into which we are accustomed to group them. Heretofore, participants in the debate over the date of the earliest reference to Osiris have been content to assign a monument like the tomb of Hemetre to one reign or dynasty rather than another, without asking what this means in terms of absolute chronology. But if the tomb was actually built and decorated at the end of the fourth dynasty, as some maintain, how much older would this make it than if it was built in the middle of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth dynasty? How much time would have elapsed between the completion of its decoration and those of the tomb of Ti or the pyramid temple of Djedkare Izezi, two later monuments where the name of Osiris appears as well? All we can do is estimate, taking into account the highest attested year date for each individual ruler during the relevant span of time as given in contemporary sources and combining these with information obtained from later sources like the Turin Canon. But as we saw when trying to determine the age of Ptahshepses at the commencement of Niuserre's reign, the results obtained by this method can vary considerably.

[108] The same is true of, e.g., the name of Anubis.

3.4. EARLY ORTHOGRAPHIES AND THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE NAME OF OSIRIS

3.4.1. Early orthographies of the name

The name of Osiris is written in more than one way on the monuments discussed in the preceding paragraphs and on other monuments of Old Kingdom date.[109] The example from the pyramid temple of Djedkare Izezi comprises two signs, the seat or throne (Gardiner Sign-List Q1) followed by the eye (Gardiner Sign-List D4). This is the normal sequence in the Pyramid Texts as well.[110] In the tombs of Ptahshepses, Ti, and Hemetre, the order of these signs is reversed. The same is true of the writings of Osiris on the false door of Inti. But examples of the other orthography, throne followed by eye, are not lacking in private tombs of the later Old Kingdom.[111]

Unlike the writings of the name of Osiris on royal monuments, those from the tombs of Ptahshepses, Ti, and Hemetre end with a determinative, the seated god sign (Gardiner Sign-List A40). So do those on the false door of Inti. The instance of the name from the pyramid temple of Djedkare Izezi may be part of a label accompanying a depiction of the god.[112] If it is, this could explain why it has no determinative, since the representation itself could have performed that function. In the Pyramid Texts, the reason that the name was written without a determinative is probably that there was a reluctance to employ determinatives depicting complete living creatures in inscriptions in the burial chamber and adjacent rooms.[113] From the reign of Teti onward, writings of the name of Osiris in the burial chambers and on sarcophagi of non-royal individuals omit the seated god sign as well, even though this was not normal practice earlier.[114]

Although the order of the phonetic components of the name can vary in writing, it is clear from later evidence like the Greek form *Ὄσιρις* that the element *ỉr* represented by the eye sign comes at the end. Furthermore, on account of Middle Kingdom orthographies that show a phonetic complement *r* after the *ỉr*, this must be a form of the verb 'make, do'.[115] The reading of the initial sign, the seat or throne, is more problematic. This looks as if it should be the noun *s.t*, 'place, seat', but that is difficult to reconcile with Coptic forms like ⲟⲩⲥⲓⲣⲉ and Greek ones like *Ὄσιρις*. Perhaps there was a change in pronunciation that led to these later forms.

[109] See H. Fischer, 'Quelques particuliers à Saqqâra', in C. Berger and B. Mathieu (eds), *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer* (Montpellier, 1997), p. 180.

[110] G. Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches* (Mainz am Rhein, 1986), pp. 6 and 239; J. Allen, 'The name of Osiris (and Isis)', *Lingua Aegyptia* 21 (2013), p. 10.

[111] Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, pp. 6–7 and 239.

[112] See references cited in note 47.

[113] Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 83–4.

[114] See N. Kanawati, 'Decoration of Burial Chambers, Sarcophagi and Coffins in the Old Kingdom', in K. Daoud, S. Bedier, and S. Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2 (Cairo, 2005), pp. 60–1, 64–6, and 68; Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, pp. 6–8 and 239.

[115] See J. Osing, 'Isis und Osiris', *MDAIK* 30 (1974), pp. 109–10; Allen, *Lingua Aegyptia* 21 (2013), p. 12.

3.4.2. The etymology of the name

Egyptologists have devoted much time and energy to trying to establish an etymology for the name Osiris.[116] This was a popular practice among the ancient Egyptians as well, and Egyptian texts frequently engage in wordplay involving his name and homonyms, for example, *wsr*, 'mighty'.[117] To date, no convincing etymology has been proposed, however. What is needed is one that satisfies the requirements of phonology, orthography, and sense. Some proposed etymologies satisfy one or two of these criteria, but none satisfies all three. It is by no means certain that knowing the true etymology of the name of Osiris would leave us better informed about his relationship with the deceased, so this question will not be investigated in any detail here. A look at one etymology that has been suggested will be sufficient to illustrate the sorts of problems involved.

Lorton proposes to read the name of the deity as *s.t-ỉr.t*, and interpret it to mean 'product, something that has been made'. He sees here an allusion to Osiris as a mummy, a 'product' of the mummification process.[118] According to him, the divine concept of Osiris arose at the same time that true mummification was introduced, at some point during the fifth dynasty, and was a response to this innovation. For Lorton, 'true' mummification seems to be characterized by the treatment of the body with natron.

Although this interpretation has been accepted enthusiastically by some,[119] I think it is unlikely to be correct. We have already seen that the Coptic and Greek forms of the name of Osiris make the reading of its initial element as *s.t* problematic.[120] But a more serious objection is that the earliest Egyptian attempts at artificial preservation of the body, including evisceration and treatment with natron, pre-date the first appearance of Osiris by many centuries.[121] Likewise, the practice of mummification remained in use well after the god's disappearance from the record.[122] Thus, although mummification

[116] For surveys of such attempts, see e.g. Lorton, *Varia Aegyptiaca* 1 (1985), pp. 114–17; Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), p. 79; Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 97–103; Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, pp. 87–107; W. Westendorf, 'Zur Etymologie des Namens Osiris: **wꜥs.t-jr.t* "die das Auge trägt"', in J. Osing and G. Dreyer (eds), *Form und Mass: Beiträge zur Literatur, Sprache und Kunst des alten Ägypten. Festschrift für Gerhard Fecht zum 65. Geburtstag am 6. Februar 1987* (Wiesbaden, 1987), pp. 456–61; Allen, *Lingua Aegyptia* 21 (2013), pp. 9–10.

[117] See e.g. M.-Th. Derchain-Urtel, 'Die Namen der Götter', in W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, and H. Willems (eds), *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years* 1 (Leuven, 1998), pp. 577–81; Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), p. 80; Allen, *Lingua Aegyptia* 21 (2013), pp. 9–11.

[118] Lorton, *Varia Aegyptiaca* 1 (1985), pp. 117–21.

[119] See e.g. Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), pp. 79 and 99–100.

[120] The attempts of Lorton, *Varia Aegyptiaca* 1 (1985), pp. 124–5, to explain away the difficulties involved are not convincing, in my opinion.

[121] See sections 1.2.1 and 2.1.1.

[122] See G. Fischhaber, *Mumifizierung im koptischen Ägypten: Eine Untersuchung zur Körperlichkeit im 1. Jahrtausend n. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 1997); I. Uytterhoeven, *Hawara in the Graeco-Roman Period: Life and Death in a Fayum Village* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2009), p. 484 note 122, and references cited there.

and belief in Osiris coincided for a period of several centuries, there were substantial spans of time both before and after his cult was in existence when bodies were mummified without reference to the god. The corpse of Osiris underwent this process, according to the myth, because ideally that was how the bodies of high status individuals were supposed to be treated at the time when the myth first arose. It was not a process that was devised specifically for his benefit. Therefore, any etymology of the god's name that connects it too closely with mummification is suspect.[123]

3.4.3. The determinative of the name

In the tombs of Ptahshepses and Ti discussed in sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 respectively, the seated god determinative found in writings of the name of Osiris (Gardiner Sign-List A40) is also used to determine the following nouns and epithets: *ḫnty ʾImnty.w*, 'Foremost of the westerners', *nṯr*, 'god', *ꜣḫ*, 'spirit', *iqr*, 'excellent', *ḥꜣy*, 'protector, advocate', and *ḏꜣḏꜣ.t*, '(divine) council'.[124] This sign is characterized by a distinctive beard. According to Shalomi-Hen, this is the same beard used in Egyptian representations of foreigners, and so Osiris originally must have been human and of foreign origin.[125] However, Nyord has pointed out that the beard of Gardiner Sign-List A40 is actually the long curved divine beard, sometimes shown with a knob at the end, which is different to the shorter straight beard seen in representations of foreigners.[126] The two are clearly distinguished in the scenes of the pyramid temple of Sahure.[127] The curved divine beard is already found in depictions of Egyptian deities on fragments of relief from Heliopolis, now in Turin.[128] These originate from a shrine built by the third dynasty ruler Djoser, so it is clear that the beard in question was part of the iconography of indigenous gods well before the first apearance of Osiris. Thus there is no reason to accept Shalomi-Hen's argument that he was originally a human being of foreign origin.

[123] In this connection it is worth noting that mummiform representations of Osiris do not occur before the Middle Kingdom. See Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 107–9; Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, p. 85.

[124] Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 73 and 75–9.

[125] Ibid., pp. 71–113.

[126] R. Nyord, Review of R. Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods: The Evolution of Divine Classifiers in the Old Kingdom*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 15 (2007), pp. 325–7.

[127] Contrast the divine beards of the figures in the second and third registers of the relief fragment depicted in Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Śaꜥḥu-reʿ* 2, plate 19, with the short, straight beards of the seated figures used to determine the foreign ethonyms *ʾIwnty.w* and *Mnṯy.w* in the accompanying hieroglyphic inscription; also the beards of the foreign captives depicted ibid., plates 6–7.

[128] See Morenz in Beinlich, Hallof, Hussy, and von Pfeil (eds), *5. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung*, pp. 155–7.

3.5. SPECULATION ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF OSIRIS

No ancient Egyptian sources record how or in what circumstances belief in Osiris arose. This silence has left considerable scope for speculation about his origins, an opportunity which modern scholars have not been slow to exploit. Various theories have been proposed, according to which Osiris was originally a god of agriculture, vegetation, or fertility, a chthonic deity, a panther goddess, a jackal god, a personification of the deceased on the embalming bed, a deified human ruler, or an amalgam of all deceased kings, a generic royal ancestor. His cult, according to these theories, emanated from the eastern delta, Upper Egypt, or from abroad, whether the Levant, Libya, or even Babylonia.[129] None of these theories can be proven, or even tested in a meaningful way, and all of them project belief in the deity back into the remote past, well before we actually have any evidence for it, so they will not be discussed further here. Instead, we will consider a number of theories that connect the entry of Osiris into the Egyptian pantheon with various developments that occurred around the time of his first appearance in the historical record.

3.5.1. The rise of Osiris and the demise of solar temples

It has long been noted that solar temples ceased to be built at roughly the same point during the fifth dynasty that the earliest references to Osiris begin to occur in our written sources.[130] The last solar temple of which any physical remains survive is that belonging to Niuserre. The last one to be mentioned by name in contemporary documents is that of his successor Menkauhor.[131] Niuserre probably appropriated the solar temple of his ephemeral predecessor Reneferef and adapted it for his own

[129] For surveys of the various theories about the origin of Osiris, see Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*; Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 97–113; Scharff, *Die Ausbreitung des Osiriskultes in der Frühzeit und während des Alten Reiches*; W. Helck, 'Osiris', in K. Ziegler (ed.), *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Supplementband 9 (Stuttgart, 1962), pp. 469–513; F. Hassan, 'Primeval Goddess to Divine King: The Mythogenesis of Power in the Early Egyptian State', in R. Friedman and B. Adams (eds), *The Followers of Horus: Studies Dedicated to Michael Allen Hoffman* (Oxford, 1992), p. 315; U. Effland, 'Das Gottesgrab: Der Gott Osiris in Umm el-Qaab/Abydos', *Sokar* 16 (2008), p. 11; Altenmüller in Bárta and Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000*, pp. 310–16; Altenmüller, *SAK* 27 (1999), pp. 5–7; Altenmüller in Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen: Festschrift für Rolf Gundlach*, pp. 9–15; J. Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III: A Study of Middle Kingdom State Activity and the Cult of Osiris at Abydos* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996), pp. 11–36; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 49; M. Bárta, *Journey to the West: The World of the Old Kingdom Tombs in Ancient Egypt* (Prague, 2011), pp. 187–9, all with references to additional literature.

[130] See e.g. Kees in Mercer (ed.), *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary* 4, pp. 123–4 and 139.

[131] M. Nuzzolo, 'The Sun Temples of the Fifth Dynasty: A Reassessment', *SAK* 36 (2007), pp. 237–8; S. Voß, *Untersuchungen zu den Sonnenheiligtümern der 5. Dynastie* (Hamburg, 2004), pp. 155–8; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 218–19.

use. As we saw in section 3.3.3, it is in the latter's reign that the earliest references to Osiris start to appear.

Djedkare Izezi, the king who followed Menkauhor on the throne, did not construct a solar temple. Moreover, unlike the rulers who came immediately before him, he built his pyramid complex at Saqqara rather than Abusir. Djedkare's successor Unis built his pyramid complex at Saqqara as well. He was also the first king to have texts for the afterlife inscribed in the subterranean rooms of his pyramid. So it seems as if there was a definite change in religious practice around the time of transition between the reigns of Niuserre and Djedkare.

Some think there is a connection between the demise of the solar temple and the rise of Osiris. According to one view, the latter was a direct cause of the former. The type of cult performed in the solar temples was replaced or superseded by Osirian ritual observances as a result of a growing emphasis upon that deity as a model for the resurrection of the king in the afterlife.[132] Another view is that whereas earlier in the fifth dynasty the pyramid complex and the solar temple formed a unit designed to ensure both the resurrection of the individual king and the perpetual renewal of the institution of kingship itself, from the time of Djedkare Izezi onward the rites intended to achieve these aims were all performed in the pyramid complex, thus obviating the need for a separate solar temple.[133]

The difficulty with both views is that we have no real evidence for the nature of the cultic activities that took place in solar temples. The titles of the priests attached to them indicate that the chief beneficiary of their cult was Re.[134] As we saw in section 2.4.4, some think they were venues for the performance of rites analogous to those performed in the royal pyramid temple, only for the benefit of the sun god rather than a deceased king. One interpretation regards them as ritual arenas for the celebration of the sun god Re's renewal. According to this view, the deity died and was reborn each day, and the solar temple fulfilled the same function for him as the pyramid temple did for the dead monarch.[135] If this was the case, and the solar temple itself had no connection with the cult of the deceased king, then it is difficult to see how a change in the ritual means of supplying the ruler's requirements in the afterlife could have led

[132] See W. Kaiser, 'Zu den Sonnenheiligtümern der 5. Dynastie', *MDAIK* 14 (1956), p. 115; H. Goedicke, 'Abusir—Saqqara—Giza', in Bárta and Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000*, pp. 408–9; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 225–6; Verner, 'The Fifth Dynasty's Mysterious Sun Temples', *KMT* 14 (2003), pp. 56–7; M. Nuzzolo, 'Royal Architecture and Pyramid Texts: Some Remarks on Kingship in the III Millennium B.C.', in F. Raffaele, M. Nuzzolo, and I. Incordino (eds), *Recent Discoveries and Latest Researches in Egyptology* (Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 188–90; M. Nuzzolo, 'The V Dynasty Sun Temples Personnel', *SAK* 39 (2010), p. 307; Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, p. 164.

[133] See Nuzzolo, *SAK* 36 (2007), pp. 235–40; Nuzzolo in Goyon and Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 2, pp. 1401–10; Vymazalová in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 298–300.

[134] Voß, *Untersuchungen zu den Sonnenheiligtümern der 5. Dynastie*, pp. 39–53, 117–23, 137–9, 141–50, and 154–8.

[135] See J. Janák, H. Vymazalová, and F. Coppens, 'The Fifth Dynasty "Sun Temples" in a Broader Context', in M. Bárta, F. Coppens, and J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2010/1* (Prague, 2011), pp. 433–4 and 441.

or contributed to the demise of that institution. Nor is it clear why an increased emphasis upon Osiris should have resulted in a diminution of Re's importance.[136] If the activities originally performed in the solar temple were moved to another venue after the reign of Menkauhor, as some think, perhaps this was not the pyramid complex, but the shrine of the sun god in Heliopolis instead.[137]

3.5.2. The rise of Osiris and claims to possess the status of *akh*

Hays has drawn attention to the fact that Osiris makes his first appearance in written sources at the same time that we start to find statements in private tombs where their owners identify themselves as *akhs* or spirits. According to him this is significant because one of the chief characteristics of Osiris is that he is an *akh*.[138] In support of his view he cites various passages from the Pyramid Texts in which that god is said to be an *akh*, dwell among *akhs*, possess an *akh*, or bestow the status of *akh* upon others.

Some might interpret this to mean that the two phenomena, the introduction of Osiris and the new emphasis on claiming the status of *akh* for oneself, were somehow related; in other words, that one gave rise to or facilitated the other. In my opinion, however, such an interpretation is unjustified. Hays is correct in stating that Osiris was considered to be an *akh*. However, this status was not innate or inherent. He became an *akh* because, according to the myth, Isis and Nephthys recited *sakhu* or glorification spells to transform him into one. But these spells were not devised specifically for the god. Their recitation was already a recognized component of the mortuary cult of high-status individuals in the reign of Snefru at the beginning of the fourth dynasty, well before the first appearance of Osiris in the historical record.[139] Thus, the practice of reciting glorifications, like that of mummification discussed in section 3.4.2, was well established long before he entered the scene. In both cases, Osiris benefited from a pre-existing rite. *Sakhu* were recited for him because they were recited for the dead, not the other way around. As a result, the deity was an *akh*, but only one among many. Initially, at least, he was no more the paradigmatic spirit than he was the paradigmatic mummy.

Thus the proliferation of claims to be an *akh* and possess the powers and privileges inherent in that status in tomb inscriptions of this time has nothing to do with the rise of Osiris. Rather it is related to another phenomenon whose development Coulon has traced admirably: the increased emphasis in contemporary tomb texts upon an individual's rhetorical facility, his ability to speak persuasively and justify his actions and desires to others.[140] Through the rhetorical strategy of asserting that he is an *akh*, the

[136] See Voß, *Untersuchungen zu den Sonnenheiligtümern der 5. Dynastie*, pp. 184–92.

[137] Cf. Vymazalová in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 300–1.

[138] Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 123. Cf. Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, pp. 130–1.

[139] See sections 2.1.2 and 2.6.1.

[140] L. Coulon, 'Rhétorique et stratégies du discours dans les formules funéraires: Les innovations des Textes des Sarcophages', in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, pp. 119–42.

tomb owner seeks to compel those who visit his burial place to behave appropriately in his presence and perform the requisite services for him.

3.5.3. Osiris as an instrument of state control?

None of the theories considered thus far have proposed a mechanism or agent for the sudden appearance of Osiris in the written record. Speculation about the god's origin seldom does so. Goedicke, for example, claims that Osiris replaced the king as guarantor of the afterlife during the fifth dynasty, thus demythologizing the latter's role.[141] But he does not explain how, in what reign, or why he thinks this happened. Verner likewise believes that Osiris replaced the king as guarantor of the afterlife at this time. He thinks that this was due to weakness on the part of the rulers of the fifth dynasty, as a result of which they were forced to share the role of provider of sustenance for the dead with Osiris. But he does not say who forced them to do so or why.[142] A rare exception to the general pattern just observed is the last theory that we will examine here.

The theory in question has been proposed by Mathieu.[143] According to him, the sudden appearance of Osiris and the diffusion of his cult throughout Egypt were due to a decision made by the state. He calls this the Osirian innovation, invention, or reform. The god was created by Heliopolitan priests acting under orders from the government in order to promote political stability and encourage support for the royal family. Thus belief in Osiris was a tool used by the central authority to ensure its power and longevity.

There are no historical documents that support Mathieu's thesis. Instead, he bases his argument on passages selected from the Pyramid Texts, which he thinks contain allusions to the formulation of the Osirian dogma and its imposition throughout the country. To cite just a few examples, Pyramid Text Spell 247 makes reference to a 'great thing' (*wr.t*) that has occurred and is said to have pleased the eastern and western gods.[144] According to Mathieu, this is the invention of the new god Osiris.[145] In Pyramid Text Spell 257, the primeval gods say that they have seen something new (*mꜣ.t*).[146] Mathieu thinks that this refers to Osiris as well.[147] Spell 577 begins with the words 'Osiris has appeared, the powerful one is pure, the lord of Maat is elevated at the beginning of the year, the lord of the year.'[148] Mathieu interprets these sentences as a verbatim quotation from the royal decree that led to the establishment of Osiris's cult.[149] Several Pyramid Text spells refer to divine messengers or emissaries. Mathieu

[141] Goedicke in Bárta and Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000*, pp. 408–9.
[142] Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, pp. 70 and 242–4.
[143] Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), pp. 77–107.
[144] K. Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1 (Leipzig, 1908), p. 142, §258d.
[145] Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), p. 85.
[146] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 164, §304b.
[147] Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), p. 93.
[148] K. Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2 (Leipzig, 1910), p. 323, §1520a–b.
[149] Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), pp. 87–8.

thinks these are really the heralds of the king who were charged with spreading the gospel of Osiris throughout the country.[150] Finally, a number of spells contain threats against various beings. According to Mathieu, these are the threats made by the state against the adherents of other divinities who were reluctant to accept the new god.[151]

Although Mathieu advocates his theory with considerable fervour,[152] I do not find it convincing. Unless one accepts a priori his view that the dogma of Osiris was consciously formulated as a means of enhancing the power of the state and then imposed by royal decree throughout Egypt, there is no reason to interpret any of the Pyramid Text spells that he cites in support of it as records of or allusions to these events. In Spell 247, for example, the 'great thing' to which reference is made is actually the dead king's rebirth and not the creation of a totally new deity, as the context makes clear. In Spell 257, the new thing seen by the primeval gods is likewise the deceased king, who is 'new' in the sense of being renewed, i.e. restored to life.[153] In Spell 577, the supposed quotation from the royal decree that established Osiris's cult is actually attributed to Thoth, not a king. Divine decrees and proclamations of various sorts are common in Egyptian texts for the afterlife of all periods, and there is no reason to think that any of these have antecedents in decrees that were actually promulgated by human rulers.[154] So too, divine messengers like those who figure in several Pyramid Text spells are well attested in other religious works,[155] and threats against deities and other beings are a recurrent feature in Egyptian rituals of all periods.[156] None of these have any apparent basis in historical reality. Spell 524 even says that the king has escaped from the messengers of Osiris,[157] which would make no sense if these emissaries had actually been dispatched by the ruler.

Another problem with Mathieu's theory is that several of the spells that he cites in support of it are not actually attested in the two earliest pyramids inscribed with Pyramid Texts, those of Unis and Teti. Spell 577, for instance, is only found in the pyramid of the sixth dynasty ruler Pepi I, who reigned at a time when the cult of Osiris had long since been firmly established. If the god's cult really was created by a royal decree, acceptance of which had to be imposed by force in the face of signficant

[150] Ibid., pp. 91–2. [151] Ibid., pp. 92–5.

[152] See, for instance, his comment, ibid., p. 92, about the spells that refer to messengers or emissaries: 'Comment ne pas reconnaître dans ces textes la transposition, dans un cadre funéraire, de l'activité intense déployée sur le territoire égyptien lors de la diffusion de l' "évangile" osirien?'

[153] For this use of the verb *m3*, common in Egyptian texts for the afterlife, see e.g. M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), p. 549, notes 16 and 23. It is also predicated of Re and other already existing gods, in parallel with verbs like *'nḫ*, 'live', and *rnpi*, 'be rejuvenated'. See *Wb.* 2, 25, 18–19.

[154] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 601.

[155] M. Valloggia, *Recherche sur les 'messagers' (wpwtyw) dans les sources égyptiennes profanes* (Geneva and Paris, 1976), pp. 40–64, with discussion of divine messengers in the Pyramid Texts on pp. 48–51.

[156] See e.g. H. Altenmüller, 'Götterbedrohung', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 2 (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 664–9, with references to additional literature.

[157] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 197, §1236d.

opposition from some quarters, why is the only spell that allegedly quotes such an important proclamation not attested before that king's reign?

In fact, Mathieu has offered what is known as an 'adaptive reading' for these spells, one that takes an unproven view or idea as its starting point, assumes it to be fact, and interprets a text in accordance with it.[158] Thus interpreted, the contents of the text appear to support that view, which then provides the basis for interpreting further texts in the same way. As Hays has remarked of another theory, 'Proposition is applied to evidence to yield meaning.'[159] The argument is essentially a circular one, in which no independent proof for the view or idea underlying the interpretation is ever forthcoming, and so does not convince.

In this respect, Mathieu's theory is very much a throwback to the ideas of earlier scholars who believed that passages in religious texts could be used to reconstruct Egyptian history. Sethe, for example, was convinced that at some period in Egypt's remote past there were two separate kingdoms in Upper and Lower Egypt. According to him, the Lower Egyptian kingdom conquered and ruled the Upper Egyptian one for a time before being defeated in turn by its southern rival.[160] Like Mathieu, he was unable to cite any documentary evidence in support of his view, but relied instead upon an adaptive reading of sources like the Pyramid Texts to buttress it.

Pyramid Text Spell 239, to cite just one example, reads in its entirety: 'The white crown has emerged and swallowed the great one. The white crown's tongue has swallowed the great one with the tongue unseen.'[161] Sethe interpreted this spell as a song celebrating Upper Egypt's triumph over Lower Egypt.[162] Spell 242 says: 'The fire has been extinguished, no torch can be found in the house where the Ombite is. The biting snake pervades the house of the one whom it would bite, being hidden in it.'[163] Sethe thought this spell referred to Upper Egypt's liberation from Lower Egypt as well.[164] In fact, both spells are apotropaic utterances directed against snakes, further evidence of the unreliability of adaptive readings.[165]

Mathieu's reading of the Pyramid Texts has another feature in common with that of Sethe. Both purport to identify references to a particular historical event in that corpus. However, neither is able to say precisely when the event in question actually occurred. For Sethe, the conflict between Upper and Lower Egypt took place at some unspecified

[158] For this term, see H. Hays, 'Unreading the Pyramids', *BIFAO* 109 (2009), p. 209, note 72, citing H. Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 94, where it is defined as 'a reading which overreads or underreads a text to force its meaning'. With such an approach, 'one is no longer supporting a reading from an analysis of the evidence, but creating a reading by adaptation'.

[159] Hays, *BIFAO* 109 (2009), p. 200.

[160] See Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter*.

[161] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 135, §243a–b.

[162] K. Sethe, *Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten* 1 (Glückstadt and Hamburg, 1936), p. 219.

[163] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 136, §247a–b.

[164] Sethe, *Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten* 1, pp. 226–7.

[165] See Leitz, *Orientalia* 65 (1996), pp. 381–427, with discussion of these two spells on pp. 383 and 408–10.

point in the predynastic period. For Mathieu, the decision to invent the new god Osiris whose dogma would serve as a prop or support for the regime was taken by 'a central power', but not, apparently, by a specific king. All he can say is that this momentous step was taken sometime between the end of the fourth dynasty and the middle of the fifth.[166] In both cases, the event to which the Pyramid Texts allegedly refer is 'historical' yet somehow remains outside history. As long as this is so, the theory of an Osirian 'reform' instigated by the state, like that of a predynastic northern conquest of the south, will continue to be confined to the realm of speculation.

3.5.4. Summary of evidence relating to the circumstances in which Osiris arose

A number of innovations in the areas of belief in and provision for the afterlife are known to have taken place in and around the reign of Niuserre.[167] The initial appearance of Osiris in the written record shortly before the start of his reign could be a further example. But this need not mean that it was due to royal impetus. As we saw in section 2.10.2, more innovations of this sort are initially attested in the non-royal sphere during the first half of the Old Kingdom than they are in the royal one. In fact, the period around the reign of Niuserre is particularly notable for the innovations in the non-royal funerary sphere that it witnessed.[168] We may not be able to say exactly how or why belief in Osiris first arose, but we should keep an open mind about the context in which it originated.

3.6. EARLY EVIDENCE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OSIRIS AND THE DECEASED IN THE OLD KINGDOM: PRIVATE MONUMENTS

3.6.1. Osiris in offering formulas

Even if we are unable to discover the etymology of the name of Osiris or identify the factors that led to him joining the Egyptian pantheon, we can still learn much about the relationship between that god and the deceased from the sources in which he makes his first appearance. The earliest references to Osiris in private monuments occur in

[166] Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), p. 78.

[167] See Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* 1, pp. 19–23 and 26; Verner, *Sons of the Sun*, p. 70; M. Bárta, 'Architectural Innovations in the Development of the Non-Royal Tomb during the Reign of Nyuserra', in P. Jánosi (ed.), *Structure and Significance: Thoughts on Ancient Egyptian Architecture* (Vienna, 2005), pp. 105–30; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 56–7.

[168] See last two references cited in the preceding note.

offering formulas.[169] Thus, in the initial line of the inscription on the architrave from the tomb of Ptahshepses we read *ḥtp dỉ nswt ḥtp dỉ Wsỉr nṯr ꜥ nb mꜣꜥ.t*, 'An offering which the king gives, an offering which Osiris gives, the great god and lord of Maat', followed by a list of favours that these donors are supposed to grant to the tomb owner.[170]

In the tomb of Ti we find similar lists of favours or itemized offerings prefaced either with *ḥtp dỉ nswt ḥtp dỉ Wsỉr*, 'An offering which the king gives, an offering which Osiris gives', or else *ḥtp dỉ Wsỉr*, 'An offering which Osiris gives', with or without the epithet, *ḫnty D̠dw*, 'foremost in Busiris', appended to the god's name.[171] In the tomb of Hemetre, such a list is introduced with the words *ḥtp dỉ nswt ḥtp ỉnpw nb tꜣ ḏsr ḫnty sḥ-nṯr ḥtp dỉ Wsỉr*, 'An offering which the king gives, an offering which Anubis, lord of the sacred land, foremost in the divine booth, <gives>, and an offering which Osiris gives'.[172] On the false door of Inti, a request that invocation offerings be given to her at every festival is preceded by the words *ḥtp dỉ nswt dỉ Wsỉr*, 'An offering which the king gives and Osiris gives'.[173]

In other tombs roughly contemporary with these, we begin to find references to the deceased as *ỉmꜣḫ ḫr Wsỉr*, 'revered before Osiris'.[174] The sense of this expression is that they are linked or associated with that god, who looks after them and supplies their needs in the afterlife.[175] That the tomb owner is to acquire the status in question is already implicit in the inscription on the architrave of Ptahshepses, where one of the boons that Khentiamentiu is supposed to grant is that he will traverse the beautiful ways on which the revered ones (*imakhu*) go into the presence of the great god. As we have seen above, this text explicitly identifies the great god as Osiris.

These sources tell us two important things. First, Osiris and the deceased are always distinct entities. Second, they have a relationship with each other, which is one of

[169] On the offering formula, see Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*; Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*. For its later development, see D. Franke, 'The Middle Kingdom Offering Formulas—A Challenge', *JEA* 89 (2003), pp. 39–57.

[170] See James, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae Etc.* 1², plate 17 (upper). Line two of the inscription mentions offerings to be granted by Anubis, and line three offerings and favours to be granted by Khentiamentiu.

[171] See Épron and Daumas, *Le tombeau de Ti* 1, plate 39; Wild, *Le tombeau de Ti* 2, plate 102; Wild, *Le tombeau de Ti* 3, plates 182 and 184. Other offering formulas from this tomb substitute the name and epithets of Anubis for those of Osiris.

[172] Hassan, *Excavations at Gîza* 6/3, p. 48, figure 36, and plate 23A.

[173] Der Manuelian, *JARCE* 35 (1998), pp. 116 and 121.

[174] See Begelsbacher-Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches im Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV. und V. Dynastie*, pp. 121–4; Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 19.

[175] See K. Jansen-Winkeln, 'Zur Bedeutung von *jmꜣḫ*', *BSEG* 20 (1996), pp. 29–36; T. DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1: From the Archaic Period to Dynasty X* (London, 2005), pp. 191–4 and 376; J. Malek, 'The Old Kingdom', in I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2003), p. 103; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, pp. 48–9; J. Allen, 'Some Aspects of the Non-Royal Afterlife in the Old Kingdom', in M. Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology* (Prague, 2006), pp. 12 and 16–17; Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, pp. 215–19; G. Lapp, 'Totentexte der Privatleute vom Ende des Alten Reiches bis zur 1. Zwischenzeit unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Sargkammern und Särgen', *SAK* 43 (2014), pp. 214–15 note 41; C. Eyre, 'Work and the Organisation of Work in the Old Kingdom', in M. Powell (ed.), *Labor in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, 1987), p. 22.

dependence. The deceased are subordinate to the god, on whom they rely to provide their needs in the afterlife. The superior position of Osiris is sometimes further marked by appending epithets like 'lord of the west' and 'lord of the god's domain' (= the necropolis) to his name, emphasizing that he is the ruler of the realm of the dead. Similar epithets assert the god's dominion over cult centres in this world like Busiris and Abydos.[176]

In the inscription on the architrave of Ptahshepses, Osiris is characterized as 'lord of Maat'. He has the same epithet on other architraves from fifth and sixth dynasty private tombs.[177] As we saw in section 2.5, a fifth dynasty text that refers to the righteous (*mꜣʿ-ḫrw*) who dwell in peace in the presence of the great god may provide evidence of belief in a general judgement of the dead at this time. If so, perhaps the epithet 'lord of Maat' signifies that Osiris had oversight of this process, as he was thought to do in later periods of Egyptian history. One of the boons requested in the offering formula on the false door from the tomb of Neferseshemre at Saqqara (sixth dynasty) is that the deceased be 'righteous in the heart of Osiris' (*mꜣʿ ḥr ỉb n Wsỉr*).[178] This could be seen as further evidence to support such a conclusion.

3.6.2. The role of Osiris in relation to other deities mentioned in offering formulas

One other important thing we learn from these early references to Osiris in private tombs is that he is by no means the only god who provides for the needs of the deceased in the afterlife. Texts like those from the tombs of Ptahshepses, Ti, and Hemetre indicate that he does this alongside other deities like Anubis and Khentiamentiu. So in his earliest appearances, Osiris is one of a group of divinities who perform services for the dead. Some, for example, Anubis, are attested in this role before he is.[179] Thus, the main functions that Osiris assumes are already established rather than new ones, which he then shares with those gods who performed them prior to his advent.

Is there any sort of division of labour among these deities, or evidence of specialization? Are certain boons sought from some divinities more often than others? In the Old Kingdom, there are no boons that we can associate exclusively with Osiris. In the fifth dynasty, both he and Anubis are asked to provide invocation offerings and permit the deceased to travel on the beautiful roads on which the *imakhu* travel. Unlike Anubis, however, Osiris is rarely invoked to grant a good burial.[180] In requests of the

[176] Begelsbacher-Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches im Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV. und V. Dynastie*, pp. 121–2 and 125.

[177] See Fischer, *Göttinger Miszellen* 128 (1992), p. 73.

[178] See J. Capart, *Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah* 2 (Brussels, 1907), plate 11; Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 31. The boon is requested of Anubis.

[179] Ibid., pp. 5–8; DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1*, pp. 143–6 and 375; Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 121–2; see also section 2.4.3.

[180] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 15.

later Old Kingdom, there is a slight preference for Osiris where the provision of offerings is concerned. This becomes more pronounced with the passage of time, although Anubis is still the deity looked to for burial.[181] Thus one might say that the primary benefits Osiris was expected to provide for the deceased in offering formulas of this time were sustenance and social reintegration in the afterlife.

3.7. EARLY EVIDENCE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OSIRIS AND THE DECEASED IN THE OLD KINGDOM: ROYAL MONUMENTS

3.7.1. Pyramid Text spells that distinguish the deceased king and Osiris

Turning now to royal monuments, too little is preserved of the relief fragment from the pyramid temple of Djedkare Izezi that mentions Osiris to allow us to determine what sort of relationship between the god and the king, if any, was envisaged there. According to one suggestion, the divine name may have been part of a caption that can be restored to read *dỉ=f ʿnḫ Wsỉr*, 'May he give life, Osiris.'[182] If this suggestion is correct, then the god and the king were clearly distinguished from each other, with the former conceptualized as being superior to the latter, by virtue of the fact that the ruler is beholden to the deity for his life. But, owing to the poor state of preservation of the fragment, we cannot be certain that this is how the damaged text should be restored. For more definite information about how the relationship between Osiris and the deceased was conceptualized on royal monuments of the Old Kingdom, we must turn to the Pyramid Texts.[183]

Like the non-royal sources that we have just examined, these spells offer us plenty of evidence that their authors made a clear distinction between Osiris and the deceased king. Thus we find spells in which it is said that the latter has or will come to Osiris (477,[184] 540,[185] 559,[186] 675),[187] worship him (561B),[188] be in his following (310),[189] clothe him, wipe his face and be pure for him (477),[190] repeat what Osiris has done

[181] Ibid., pp. 25 and 38.
[182] See Eaton-Krauss, *Varia Aegyptiaca* 3 (1987), pp. 234–5.
[183] For surveys of the chief ways in which this relationship is configured in that corpus, see Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 120–1; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 167–74 and 230–4; Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), pp. 100–2.
[184] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 38–41, §964a, 965c, 966a, 967a, and 968a.
[185] Ibid., p. 236, §1328a. [186] Ibid., p. 258, §1392a. [187] Ibid., p. 483, §2000a.
[188] I. Pierre-Croisiau, *Les textes de la pyramide de Pépy 1er*, volume 2 (Cairo, 2001), plate 22, line 26.
[189] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 255, §493a
[190] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 39–42, §964b–c, 966b–c, 967b–c, and 968b–c.

(365),[191] perform an action in parallel with him and other gods (25,[192] 447,[193] 450),[194] be lifted up by him (486),[195] look down upon him from a distance (245),[196] and even clean out his navel with his little finger (204).[197] There are other spells in which the king is described or identifies himself as the son of Osiris (303,[198] 310,[199] 540),[200] his brother (676),[201] or his successor (422,[202] 436,[203] 677),[204] and spells in which Osiris is asked to do various things for the king (217)[205] or it is said that the king will be announced to that god by name (374).[206] Nor is the relationship envisaged between the two always harmonious. Two spells provide assurances that the deceased king will not be handed over to Osiris (215,[207] 264),[208] another expresses the hope that Osiris will not come against the king and his tomb 'in this his evil coming' (534),[209] while in a third the king has to avoid stepping in Osiris's corruption (412).[210]

3.7.2. Pyramid Text spells that identify the deceased king with Osiris

But the situation in the Pyramid Texts is a bit more complex than that which we find in texts from private tombs, because in addition to the spells just cited, there are other spells containing statements that identify the deceased king with Osiris or where acts are predicated of the king 'as Osiris'. Examples include 'NN is Osiris in a dust-devil' (258,[211] similarly 259),[212] 'Raise yourself as Osiris' (437),[213] 'O this NN, raise yourself, stand up. The great Ennead which is in Heliopolis has assigned you to your great throne so that you may sit, this NN, at the head of the Ennead as Geb, prince of the gods, as Osiris at the head of the powers, and as Horus lord of nobles and gods' (468),[214] 'Isis has sat down with her arms atop her and Nephthys has grasped the tips of her breasts because of their brother NN, an infant on his belly, an Osiris in his danger (?), an Anubis with extended paws' (535),[215] 'O Horus, this NN is Osiris, this pyramid

[191] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 334, §622b.
[192] Ibid., p. 10, §17a–c. [193] Ibid., p. 460, §826a–b.
[194] Ibid., p. 463, §832a–b. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 231, understands cases like this and the two preceding ones as a form of 'interpellative' identification, but the texts clearly treat Osiris and the king as distinct entities.
[195] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 83, §1044b.
[196] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 138, §251b–d.
[197] Ibid., p. 68, §118c. [198] Ibid., p. 240, §466a. [199] Ibid., p. 255, §493a.
[200] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 236, §1328a. [201] Ibid., p. 488, §2016a.
[202] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 412, §752b. [203] Ibid., p. 434, §790a.
[204] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 489, §2021a.
[205] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 88, §155a–d. [206] Ibid., p. 362, §658b.
[207] Ibid., p. 84, §145b. [208] Ibid., p. 185, §350a.
[209] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 215, §1267a.
[210] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 396, §722d. [211] Ibid., p. 166, §308a.
[212] Ibid., p. 169, §312a. [213] Ibid., p. 435, §793b. [214] Ibid., p. 500, §895a–d.
[215] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 220, §1281b–1282b.

of NN is Osiris, and (also) this construction of his' (600),[216] 'NN is Osiris who goes forth by night' (624),[217] 'This NN is Osiris' (650),[218] 'NN will take his seat as Osiris' (684),[219] 'His (scil. the deceased's) bones are knit together as Osiris' (687,[220] similarly 690),[221] and 'You have appeared to them as a jackal, as Horus at the head of the living, as Geb at the head of the Ennead, and as Osiris at the head of the spirits' (690).[222]

3.7.3. The paradox of the Pyramid Texts

Can we discern any pattern in the usage of these two different ways of relating the deceased king to Osiris? We might start by asking whether spells that distinguish Osiris and the king only occur in some pyramids, while those identifying or equating the two only occur in others. But this is not the case. Spells identifying the deceased king and Osiris are more common in later pyramids than they are in those of Unis and Teti, but even in those two both types of spell appear together. The texts inscribed in the pyramid of Unis, for example, include both Spell 215, in which it is affirmed that the king will not be handed over to Osiris, and Spell 258, which says that he is Osiris in a dust-devil.

We might also investigate whether spells distinguishing the deceased king and Osiris only occur in some parts of a pyramid, e.g. the burial chamber, while those identifying them only occur in other parts, e.g. the antechamber. Again, results are negative. In the pyramid of Unis, for instance, spells that distinguish the king from Osiris are inscribed in both the burial chamber (215) and the antechamber (303). In that of Pepi I, spells that distinguish the two are found in both chambers as well,[223] and so are spells that identify the king with Osiris.[224] Likewise, in the pyramid of Pepi II, spells identifying the king with Osiris appear in both burial chamber (600) and antechamber (684).

In classifying Pyramid Text spells, it has long been customary to make a distinction between those that address the deceased king directly in the second person and those in which he is referred to in the third person.[225] It is generally accepted that the former were recited by others for the benefit of the king in the context of the mortuary rites, while the latter were meant to be employed by the king himself. There is evidence to show that in some cases the third person pronouns in the second group of spells have been altered from original first person pronouns.[226] Hays has termed these two groups

[216] Ibid., p. 375, §1657a–b.
[217] Ibid., p. 424, §1761d.
[218] Ibid., p. 449, §1833a.
[219] Ibid., p. 498, §2054.
[220] Ibid., p. 505, §2076c.
[221] Ibid., p. 511, §2097a.
[222] Ibid., pp. 512–13, §2103c–d.
[223] Cf. Spells 422 (burial chamber) and 477 (antechamber).
[224] Cf. Spells 437 (burial chamber) and 468 (antechamber).
[225] See references cited in Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 46 note 103, and 162 note 445.
[226] Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 138–58. This change is made less frequently in the texts inscribed in the pyramids of sixth dynasty queens, as noted by Morales in Quack and Luft (eds), *Schrift und Material* (forthcoming).

of spells 'sacerdotal' and 'personal'.[227] Is the deceased king distinguished from Osiris in one group of spells and identified with him in the other? An examination of the Pyramid Text spells cited thus far reveals that the answer is no. Spell 215, for example, says that the king will not be handed over to Osiris, thus making a clear distinction between him and the god, while Spell 437 enjoins the king to raise himself as Osiris. Both are 'sacerdotal' texts that address their beneficiary in the second person. Likewise, Spells 600 and 650 assert that the deceased king is Osiris, while Spell 310 says that he has come in the following of Osiris. All three spells are 'personal' texts by Hays's definition.

In fact, what we find is that sometimes the deceased king and Osiris are both distinguished from each other and identified with each other in one and the same spell. Pyramid Text Spells 258 and 259, for example, both state that the king is Osiris in a dust-devil. But the latter also says that the two attendants who mourned for Osiris (scil. Isis and Nephthys) have mourned for the king as well, evidently envisaging two different acts performed for two different beneficiaries.[228] Although it is proclaimed that the deceased king will take his place as Osiris in Pyramid Text Spell 684, the same spell goes on to address the god Osiris directly while referring to the king in the third person, promising that he will spit on the deity's scalp and prevent it from going bald,[229] thus treating them as two separate entities. The deceased king is said to appear as Osiris, among other deities, in Pyramid Text Spell 690, but that spell goes on to say 'If Osiris is in a bad state, then this NN will be in a bad state',[230] and affirms that Horus has come to do for the king what he did for his father Osiris,[231] so clearly distinguishing between them in each instance.

Things are even more complicated, however, because some of the same Pyramid Text spells that appear to identify the deceased king with Osiris identify him with other deities as well. Sometimes the king is identified with several deities in a single spell.[232] In Pyramid Text Spell 437, for instance, he is enjoined to raise himself as Osiris, but later on in the same spell he is urged to stand up as Anubis and receive a spirit form as Horus the son of Osiris.[233] Spell 468 says that the deceased king has been assigned a great throne so that he can sit at the head of the Ennead as Osiris, but the spell also says

[227] H. Hays, 'Old Kingdom Sacerdotal Texts', *JEOL* 41 (2008–9), p. 49; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 10–13, 125–203, and 265–8. Ibid., pp. 207, 210–11, and 215, Hays admits that the ancient Egyptians did not always draw the boundaries between these categories as distinctly as he does, and in fact his attributions of spells to one or the other of them are sometimes rather arbitrary.

[228] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 170, §313b.

[229] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 498, §2055a–b.

[230] Ibid., p. 513, §2105a.

[231] Ibid., p. 515, §2115a.

[232] For the various deities with whom the deceased king can be identified in the Pyramid Texts, see H. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 2 (Leiden and Boston, 2012), pp. 487–637. I can see no basis for his claim that each time a new identity is asserted in a spell the previous one is rejected or abandoned (*The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 242). The passages from Spells 468 and 690 cited in section 3.7.2, both of which identify the king with a series of deities in parallel clauses within a single sentence, all sharing the same verb, make this improbable in my opinion.

[233] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, pp. 436–7, §793c and §795c.

that he will do this as Geb and Horus.[234] The deceased king is identified as 'Osiris in his danger(?)' in one passage of Pyramid Text Spell 535, but a subsequent passage in that spell says he is Wepwaut and Anubis.[235] Likwise the king is said to be Osiris at the beginning of Pyramid Text Spell 650, but a later passage states that he will be in front of the sky gods as Geb at the head of the Ennead.[236] There is a statement in Pyramid Text Spell 690 to the effect that the deceased king has appeared as Osiris at the head of the spirits. But this statement is preceded by others in which it is said that he has appeared as a jackal, as Horus at the head of the living, and as Geb at the head of the Ennead.[237]

3.7.4. Earlier attempts at resolving the paradox

How can we explain these apparent contradictions? At one time, it might have been said that Egyptian religion was rather primitive and that the ancient Egyptians were not very logical (or rather were 'pre-logical'), so that contradictions like this were not a problem for them. Not many people would accept such a view now. Another explanation is that the Pyramid Texts represent an accretion of several different layers of ideas expressed by various thinkers, some old and some new, each having equal validity in the eyes of those who made use of them.[238] But this is simply speculation, since we have no evidence that the present form of the Pyramid Texts is the result of such a process.

Yet another idea is that these apparent paradoxes are the result of editorial work in which the spell's beneficiary was transplanted from one role to another as utterances originally intended for one purpose were adapted for a different one. This process of transplantation gave rise to inconsistencies.[239] These were unimportant from an ancient Egyptian perspective, since once the spells had been monumentalized, i.e. inscribed on the walls of the pyramids, they were divorced from the physical practice of the rites that they had originally accompanied.[240] Again, this is speculation, since we have no firm evidence that such spells were originally used in a different way or that this process of adaptation actually took place. The idea that 'monumentalization' rendered apparent breaches in logic of this sort acceptable is also suspect, since attribution of multiple identities to the same subject is equally a feature of 'non-monumentalized' ritual texts like those inscribed on papyri, as we will see in section 3.8.1.

It has even been claimed that the Pyramid Texts are 'consciously obfuscatory',[241] but this may be truer of some modern interpretations of them than it is of the spells themselves. We need to analyse these spells as they are, not as we imagine or speculate that they might have been, since in the absence of any clear indication to the contrary we should assume that they made sense to the ancient Egyptians in this form. Thus a reading

[234] Ibid., p. 500, §895c–d.
[235] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 221, §1287c.
[236] Ibid., p. 449, §1834a–b.
[237] Ibid., pp. 512–13, §2103c–d.
[238] See Hays, *BIFAO* 109 (2009), pp. 196–7.
[239] Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 144, 149, and 173–4.
[240] Ibid., pp. 147, 159, and 173.
[241] Ibid., p. 253.

of the Pyramid Texts based upon what is actually in front of us is preferable to a reading of a hypothetical corpus of spells for whose existence we have no direct evidence.

3.8. INTERPRETING THE PYRAMID TEXTS AS RITUAL UTTERANCES

3.8.1. Identification as a ritual technique

One key to understanding the Pyramid Texts is to realize that they are ritual texts. They are not expositions of ancient Egyptian theology or descriptions of what the Egyptians thought the afterlife would be like. They may contain elements of such expositions or descriptions, but providing these is not their primary purpose. The statements they contain are functional, designed to make things happen.[242] This is true of ancient Egyptian ritual texts of all periods, and it is important for any reading of the Pyramid Text spells that we see them as part of a continuum of such ritual utterances, not just in isolation. This does not mean that we neglect the distinctive features of the Pyramid Texts, but we need to read them as Egyptologists, not as Pyramid Textologists.

As noted in the preceding paragraph, all Egyptian ritual texts are intended to make things happen. One of the ways in which they do this is by means of the technique of identification. A ritualist identifies himself as someone or something else, or a ritualist identifies another person or object as someone or something else. The technique is nicely illustrated in a pair of ritual spells from P. Brooklyn 47.218.48 + 85, a treatise on serpents and other venomous creatures that incorporates remedies for treating their bites with a combination of medicaments and incantations.[243]

The first remedy reads in its entirety: 'Very good remedy to be prepared for one suffering from any bite. Onion: grind finely in beer. <Ingest> and spit out within one day. Recite over him (scil. the patient) as a magic formula: Mouth <against> mouth, tooth against teeth. It is Re who guards against the venom, since the mouth of the god is in the place of your (scil. the serpent's) mouth. His word will strike down your venom in its place. May you depart, venom. Come, emerge upon the ground. I have brought a tooth in my hand to drive you away. This tooth of the great god has been brought, it having fallen on the ground when he was a youth. What grows upon the land, what flourishes on the desert, will overthrow you, overthrow the mark of your mouth, and overthrow the place of your teeth. Hail to you, onion. Hail to you, tooth of the god. Hail to you, first tooth of Osiris. Hail to you, unique one who protects all the gods in this your name of "onion". May you enter the belly of NN born of NN. Overthrow all venom that is in him in this your name of "onion". Kill for yourself what is in the hand

[242] Cf. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, p. 820; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 13 and 229.

[243] S. Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie* (Cairo, 1989).

of Re. May you kill what is in the hand of Horus, what is in the hand of Seth, and what is in the hand of the great Ennead. May you kill their enemies there. May you smash their heads for me in this your name of "onion". May you open your mouth against their mouths in this your name of "mouth-opener". May you eat of them in this your name of "devourer". May you grind up their limbs in this your name of "tooth". O eye of Horus, whose name is "white one who emerges from the earth, who strikes the *rekhyt*-folk for Horus". It protects Horus from those in the following of Seth. May you destroy the powerful venom that is in the mind, that is in the heart, that is in the spleen, that is in the liver, that is <in> the lungs, that is in the throat, that is in the head, that is in the hindparts, that is in every limb of NN born of NN. May the heat of your flame be against it in order to kill it. May it die through your bite.'[244]

The second remedy reads: 'Another remedy to be prepared for one suffering from the bite of any serpent: fur of baboon, 1/8; cumin, 1/8; "great-protection" resin, 1/64; honey, 1/8; sweet beer, 1/32. Strain. To be drunk by the patient. Recite over him with a magic formula: May Thoth come, equipped with his magic, supplied with his spells, in order to exorcise the venom. You (scil. the venom) will not have power in any limb of NN born of NN, just as the rebels were exorcised after they rebelled against Re himself. May you subdue it in every limb of NN born of NN, just as you subdued the two lands for Re and Maat approached your breast as a reward for it.[245] May you appear against it (scil. the venom), this noble god, son of the goddess whose magic is great. May you exorcise NN born of NN as you exorcised your own malady on this day of spitting[246] on your shoulder. May you cause it to fall to the ground from every limb of NN born of NN as you caused this enemy who rebelled against Osiris to fall. May you cause the venom to fall from the opening of the bite. Behold, I have brought divine substance from his (scil. Thoth's) own person in order to overthrow you, to expel you, to drive off the venom of every male serpent and every female serpent that is in any limb of NN born of NN.[247] Come, emerge upon the ground. I am Thoth, the eldest, son of Re.'[248]

Both of these remedies are designed to heal people who have been bitten by venomous serpents. In the first, the magician or ritualist grinds up an onion and mixes it with beer. The patient drinks this and spits it out. Then a spell is recited, in which the power of the onion is mobilized against the venom of the serpent. First the ritualist identifies the onion with the tooth of Osiris. As such it can counteract the fangs of the serpent, biting the biter, so to speak. Then the ritualist identifies the onion with

[244] P. Brooklyn 47.218.48 + 85, 2/19–26 (Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie*, pp. 56–7, unnumbered plates 6–7). Underlined words and phrases are written in red ink in the original manuscript.

[245] In other words, Thoth was invested with the insignia of the vizier as a reward for his act.

[246] Read *pg<s>*. Cf J. Quack, 'Das Pavianshaar und die Taten des Thot (pBrooklyn 47.218.48 + 85, 3,1–6)', *SAK* 23 (1996), p. 308; J. Quack, 'Philologische Miszellen 1', *Lingua Aegyptia* 2 (1992), p. 152; D. Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta d'après le papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.84* (Cairo, 2006), pp. 298–9.

[247] The divine substance in question is the 'fur of baboon' which is one of the ingredients to be mixed together to prepare the remedy. This is another name for dill seed. See Quack, *SAK* 23 (1996), pp. 308–14.

[248] P. Brooklyn 47.218.48 + 85, 3/1–6 (Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie*, pp. 61–2, unnumbered plates 8–9).

the eye of Horus, the sun, in which capacity it destroys the venom with its fiery blast. In both cases, it is the bright white colour of the onion, which it shares with tooth and sun, which provides the basis for the identification.

In the second remedy, the ritualist prepares a mixture of dill seed, cumin, 'great-protection' resin, honey, and beer. This is strained and the patient drinks it. Then the ritualist recites a spell. The incantation begins with a request that the god Thoth might come, equipped with his magic, referring to him in the third person. Subsequently, the spell addresses Thoth directly, using the second person, asking him to combat and overthrow the venom as he did the enemies of the sun god and various other foes. Then the ritualist, referring to the dill seed, claims to have some of Thoth's own fur in his possession, which has the power to overcome the venom. But at the end of the spell, the ritualist identifies himself with Thoth, saying 'I am Thoth, the eldest, son of Re.' Noteworthy is the multiplicity of perspectives here: The ritualist refers to Thoth obliquely in the third person, addresses him directly, refers to him in the third person again, and finally identifies himself with the god. For the purposes of the spell, he speaks about the deity, he speaks to the deity, and he is the deity.

Nevertheless, the purpose of this second spell is not to transform the ritualist permanently into Thoth, or a handful of dill seeds permanently into that god's fur. Nor is the purpose of the first spell to transform an onion permanently into the tooth of Osiris or the eye of Horus. As we have seen, in both cases the purpose is to heal a patient. The point is that what ritual texts say and what they are supposed to do can be two very different things. Claims identifying oneself with a deity or a part of one, or attributing such identity to another person or object, are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. They confer a power, status, or attribute associated with a particular deity upon the one thus identified in order to help achieve that end.

This is why we can find more than one such identification in the same spell, or a person can be identified with a deity in one part of a spell but distinguished from that deity in another part. A ritual can evoke an unlimited number of parallel realities simultaneously, some of which may conflict with each other. Statements affirming identity in this manner are valid within the framework of the rite, inasmuch as they help to achieve its intended effect. But they do not describe an objective or wider reality. At the end of the day, the ritualist is still a human being, who perhaps recites the same spells again the next day, the day after that, and so on. Likewise, the dill seeds are still dill seeds and the onion is still an onion when the ritual has concluded. Only in the specific context of the performance of the rite do they acquire new identities, and these are impermanent and transitory. What endure are the consequences, the effects, of the attribution of the new identities, not the identities themselves.

This is a fundamental difference between the language of ritual and the language of everyday life. The former allows for the assumption or attribution of a multiplicity of identities in a way that the latter does not. An ancient Egyptian priest speaking to a colleague in an ordinary conversation would maintain a clear distinction between himself and the person he was addressing at all times. He would not claim to be that person. Nor would he claim to be someone else, or that his colleague was someone else.

Nor would he claim to be a nearby object or that his colleague was a nearby object. Nor would he claim that a nearby object was actually something else. But the same priest addressing a deity or deities in the context of a ritual might easily say any or all of these things. What would be paradoxical or illogical in everyday conversation is unexceptional in the language of ritual. As the examples taken from the Brooklyn papyrus show, the apparent paradoxes in the Pyramid Texts that we have been considering are not a result of their monumentalization, as Hays has argued. Rather, they are inherent in the nature of ritual utterance itself.

3.8.2. Ritual identification in the Pyramid Texts

The idea that the Pyramid Texts have to be interpreted as ritual texts is hardly a new insight. Much has been written about their ritual character, and a number of scholars have specifically studied their 'ritual syntax', the distinctive features of their language that differentiate them from 'profane' texts.[249] However, studies of this type have focused primarily on the grammar of the corpus and the stylistic devices employed in its constituent spells, e.g. reiteration and alliteration, which are cited as evidence of an origin in oral discourse.[250] By contrast, less has been said about the semantic aspect that I have discussed here, the potential of the Pyramid Texts as ritual utterances to express things that would be nonsensical or paradoxical in ordinary speech.[251] Nor have the implications of this for our understanding of how the relationship between Osiris and the deceased king was conceptualized in that corpus been fully explored.

If we read the Pyramid Texts in the same way that we have read the two spells from the Brooklyn snake papyrus, then what was confusing, inconsistent, contradictory, or paradoxical suddenly becomes comprehensible. In particular, those spells that identify the deceased king with Osiris, or with other deities, appear in a different light. For the purposes of the spells in question, these identifications were essential because identifying the king with a god or gods in the ritual context was thought to confer upon him some power, status, or attribute associated with them. The divinity with whom the king is identified most frequently in the Pyramid Texts is Osiris, since the particular powers and attributes associated with the deity who had triumphed over death were of key

[249] See Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 43–93 and 123–32, with numerous references to additional literature; Morales in Quack and Luft (eds), *Schrift und Material* (forthcoming). On ritual syntax more generally, see H. Hays, 'The End of Rites of Passage and a Start with Ritual Syntax', in C. Ambos and L. Verderame (eds), *Approaching Rituals in Ancient Cultures* (Pisa and Rome, 2013), pp. 165–86; A. Pries, 'On the Use of a Grammar of Rituals: Reflections from an Egyptologist's Point of View', ibid., pp. 227–43.

[250] See, for instance, Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 72, 76, and 79–86; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, pp. 817–19; Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*, pp. 98–108.

[251] For an exception, see J. Popielska-Grzybowska, 'Religious Reality Creation Through Language in the Old Kingdom Religious Texts', in M. Bárta, F. Coppens, and J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2010/2* (Prague, 2011), pp. 680–93.

importance to the ruler as he experienced the transition from this life to the next. But this does not mean that the deceased king was supposed to become Osiris or any other god on a permanent basis, any more than the ritualist of the Brooklyn papyrus was supposed to become the god Thoth. Again, one has to distinguish between the content of a ritual utterance, what it says, and its purpose, what it is supposed to do. The former cannot be used as evidence of the latter.

Hays has interpreted Pyramid Text spells that identify the king with Osiris as evidence that in the Old Kingdom the deceased actually aspired to become that god,[252] but the examples drawn from the Brooklyn papyrus show that we are unjustified in making such a facile assumption. The reality is that the deceased king's identity as Osiris was never intended to be socially permanent. Rather it was transitory and ritually contingent. It was valid at the moment of the spells' recitation but not beyond that fleeting event.[253]

3.8.3. Pyramid Text spells as part of a ritual continuum

Now one might object to the use of these spells from the Brooklyn snake papyrus to elucidate the Pyramid Texts on two grounds. One might say that the spells in the papyrus are magical in character, whereas the Pyramid Texts are religious. Therefore no strict comparison of them is possible. But this would ignore an extensive body of research which has shown that we cannot really make a sharp distinction between religion and magic in ancient Egypt. Ritual texts recited by priests in the context of the temple cult and texts recited by so-called magicians were supposed to achieve their effects in the same way, through the power of effective utterance.[254] In fact, the same person could be the recitant of both kinds of text, which were denoted with the same term: *ḥkꜣ*.[255] The practitioner of the first operation described in the Brooklyn

[252] See Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 121 note 47; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 168.

[253] In fairness to Hays, he actually says something very similar in *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 234 (see also p. 257), but then contradicts himself by asserting that the deceased aspired to become Osiris (see above), and claiming that the dead were 'made into' or 'transformed into' that deity (*The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 232 and 253). Likewise, in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 121 note 47, he claims that 'the relationship between the deceased and the god really was one of identity'. This creates the impression that, for him, the deceased's identification with Osiris was a more lasting phenomenon and not restricted to the ritual domain.

[254] See e.g. R. Ritner, 'Egyptian Magic: Questions of Legitimacy, Religious Orthodoxy and Social Deviance', in A. Lloyd (ed.), *Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society in Honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths* (London, 1992), pp. 189–200; R. Ritner, 'Magic', in D. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* 2 (Oxford, 2001), pp. 321–36; W. Gutekunst, 'Wie "magisch" ist die "Magie" im alten Ägypten? Einige theoretische Bemerkungen zur Magie-Problematik', in A. Roccati and A. Siliotti (eds), *La Magia in Egitto ai Tempi dei Faraoni* (Milan, 1987), pp. 77–98; J. Quack, 'Magie und Totenbuch—Eine Fallstudie (pEbers 2, 1–6)', *CdE* 74 (1999), pp. 5–17; J. Quack, 'La magie au temple', in Koenig (ed.), *La magie en Égypte: À la recherché d'une définition*, pp. 41–68.

[255] For the use of this term in relation to Pyramid Text spells, see section 3.9.1.

manuscript is actually specified as a particular type of priest, the 'controller of Selkis', further emphasizing the point that there was no distinction between priest and magician.[256]

One might also object that the Brooklyn snake papyrus, which has been dated on palaeographical grounds to the sixth century BC,[257] is much later than the Pyramid Texts and thus cannot be compared with them.[258] However, apotropaic spells intended to protect against snake bite are already attested at the time of the Pyramid Texts. In fact, several of the spells in that corpus are intended to provide protection against serpents.[259] Some of these invoke the aid of deities like Thoth, just as we saw in the Brooklyn papyrus.[260] Other spells employ precisely the same language and techniques of identification that we find in the spells of that manuscript. In Pyramid Text Spell 296, for instance, the deceased king is identified with the god Geb,[261] and in Spells 294, 378, and 388, with Horus.[262] In Spell 389 the king says he is the great maiden (a lion goddess).[263] In Spell 390 he is said to draw the bowstring as Horus and pull the cord as Osiris, his foot being the foot of the goddess Mafdet and his hand her hand.[264]

Furthermore, several of these Pyramid Text anti-snake spells are attested not just in the Old Kingdom but in the Late Period as well.[265] Thus they were in use at the same time as those in the Brooklyn snake papyrus. In fact, one of the two spells from that manuscript translated in section 3.8.1, the spell utilizing an onion preserved in P. Brooklyn 47.218.48 + 85, 2/19–26, is said in the text to have been discovered in a papyrus dating to the reign of Pepi II, one of the sixth dynasty rulers whose funerary monument was inscribed with Pyramid Texts.[266] Obviously this does not constitute proof that the spell in question was composed as early as the Old Kingdom, but it does

[256] P. Brooklyn 47.218.48 + 85, 2/26 (Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie*, pp. 59 and 199–200, unnumbered plates 6–7).

[257] See Leitz, *Orientalia* 65 (1996), p. 382. Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie*, p. xi, dated the manuscript to the fourth century BC, but allowed that it could be earlier.

[258] Although Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 167, objects to the use of later sources to elucidate the Pyramid Texts, evidently he exempts himself from this stricture, since he bases his core definitions of what he calls sacerdotal and personal texts on manuscripts dating to the twenty-second and eighteenth dynasties respectively (ibid., pp. 21–45). Hays also uses the New Kingdom Book of the Dead as evidence for his theory that Pyramid Texts spells were used by the living, even though there is no contemporary evidence for this (p. 202).

[259] These include Pyramid Text Spells 226–243, 276–299, 314, 375–399, 499–500, 502, 538, 549–551, and 727–733. See Leitz, *Orientalia* 65 (1996), p. 382 note 12.

[260] Ibid., p. 387.

[261] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 228, §439b.

[262] Ibid., pp. 227, §436a, 365, §664a, and 370, §681b. In later anti-snake spells Horus is the deity with whom the beneficiary is most frequently identified.

[263] Ibid., p. 371, §682c.

[264] Ibid., p. 372, §684a and 685c–d.

[265] Pyramid Text Spells 226–243 and 276–299. See Leitz, *Orientalia* 65 (1996), p. 381 note 3; R. Hussein, 'Recontextualized—The Pyramid Texts "Snake Spells" in the Saite Contexts', *Études et Travaux* 26 (2013), pp. 274–90; Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*, pp. 92–3.

[266] P. Brooklyn 47.218.48 + 85, 3/1 (Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie*, pp. 60–1 and unnumbered plates 8–9).

show that the Egyptians regarded it as part of a continuum of ritual practice extending back into that period.

The question of whether and in what circumstances it is acceptable to use evidence from later periods of Egyptian history to elucidate material from earlier ones was discussed in section 1.11. It was concluded there that one could do so, provided that one of two criteria was met: either there had to be some form of direct continuity between the earlier material and the later evidence, or the earlier material had to be accompanied by a sufficient amount of contextualizing information as to leave no doubt that there was a genuine connection between it and the later evidence. In the present case, both criteria have been met. In my view, this justifies the use of spells like those in the Brooklyn snake papyrus to elucidate ritual utterances in the Pyramid Texts.

3.8.4. Content vs. function in Pyramid Text spells

But the approach to that corpus advocated in sections 3.8.1–3 raises a serious problem. If the content of a Pyramid Text spell does not always reflect its purpose or function in a straightforward or obvious manner, if spells that assert the deceased king's identity with Osiris or another god, or affirm that he will become the divinities in question, were not intended to effect his permanent transformation into those divinities, then what were those spells supposed to do? What were the expectations of those who used them or for whose benefit they were recited? What did they hope would happen to them as a result? If the content of a spell is not always a reliable guide to its function, then how can we determine what its function was?

3.9. PARATEXTUAL EVIDENCE AND THE WORLD BEYOND THE SPELL

3.9.1. Titles and colophons of spells as paratextual indicators of their function

For the ancient Egyptians, beyond the words of the spell and the ritual context in which they were recited there was a wider reality, which we might call the world beyond the spell. The recitation of the spell was supposed to have an impact in that world. If the words of the utterance themselves are not a reliable guide, then how can we determine what the nature of this impact was meant to be?

In the case of the two spells from the Brooklyn snake papyrus, this is easy to ascertain, because we have titles and other paratextual data that provide the requisite information. The titles of both spells make it clear that they are intended to heal people who have been bitten by venomous serpents. The first spell is followed by a sort of

colophon advising that the ritualist should always have an onion on hand, wherever he is, since this is not only useful for healing victims of snake bite, but can also be used to keep serpents away from people and their houses.[267] While the content of the spells relates purely to the ritual, their titles and other paratextual data relate to the wider world in which the ritual is supposed to have an impact. Thus we can distinguish what happens in the ritual (onion becomes tooth of Osiris and eye of Horus, ritualist becomes Thoth) and what is supposed to happen in the wider world (patient is healed, person or house is protected from snakes) as a consequence of its performance.

Because these two spells were recited for the benefit of living people, the wider world in which they are meant to have an impact is our world, the world of the living. But what about the Pyramid Texts? In their case, the world beyond the spell is not our world, the world of the living, but the afterlife. With texts of this type, how can we move from the words of the spell itself, what the spell actually says, to knowledge of what impact these words were supposed to have in the world of the dead? Some later Egyptian texts for the afterlife, for example the Coffin Texts, have titles and/or colophons, similar to those in the Brooklyn snake papyrus, which provide us with this information. It will be instructive to look at a couple of examples.

An interesting case is that of Coffin Text Spell 421, the earlier Pyramid Text Spell 315.[268] The title of this spell, indicating what it is supposed to allow the deceased to do, is 'Proceeding to Heliopolis and receiving offerings there'. But the spell reads in its entirety: 'I am the *ian*-, *hetjet*-, and *patjet*-baboons. Behold, my hindquarters are behind me, my calves are at my sides, my spinal cord is there, (in) the nest of children. I will sit among the gods and act like a baboon among the waters of the children.' Thus it makes no mention of Heliopolis, offerings, or movement of any sort. Here the disjunction between word and function to which I referred in sections 3.8.1 and 3.8.4 is particularly striking.

Even more instructive is Coffin Text Spell 228, which has both a title and a colophon.[269] In this spell, the deceased says 'I am strong, having appeared as Osiris.'[270] The title of this spell is 'Entering in front and going out behind in the midst of those who eat the bread of Osiris'.[271] The colophon states explicitly that if a man knows this spell, when he goes to the underworld he will eat bread at the side of Osiris.[272] Thus the claim to have appeared as Osiris in the body of the spell is contradicted by both its title and colophon, which make it clear that no such experience is envisaged for the deceased, who at all times remains distinct from the god. Once again, this graphically illustrates the disjunction between the contents of a spell and its purpose.

But in the Pyramid Texts we have very few titles, colophons, or other explicit markers of what a given spell is actually supposed to do. Why is this so? Some think that Pyramid Text spells never had titles or markers of this sort. Others think that they

[267] P. Brooklyn 47.218.48 + 85, 2/26–3/1 (Sauneron, *Un traité égyptien d'ophiologie*, pp. 59–60 and unnumbered plates 6–9).

[268] See A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5 (Chicago, 1954), p. 258; Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 259, §505a–c.

[269] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3 (Chicago, 1947), pp. 266–93.

[270] Ibid., p. 276b. [271] Ibid., p. 266a. [272] Ibid., pp. 292d and 293d–e.

did, but that these were omitted when the spells were inscribed on the walls of the pyramids where we find them now because they were deemed to be unnecessary.[273] Does this mean that we can say nothing about what impact the words of the Pyramid Text spells were supposed to have in wider reality? Does it mean that we can say nothing about the aspirations for the afterlife of those for whom they were recited, or what sort of posthumous existence they envisaged?

One extreme view, expressed by Hays, is that we cannot. According to him, not only is this impossible, it is actually undesirable. We should not attempt to use the Pyramid Texts as a source of information on these topics.[274] This is because, as ritual utterances, they were not meant to inform. Rather, 'they were composed to compel and provoke: they were aimed at doing things. They did not tell about the nature of the world; they created it'.[275] According to Hays, in seeking to grasp the informational content of the Pyramid Texts, i.e. what they actually tell us about Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife, all we really accomplish is to convert them into a prism or lens through which we view the world from the vantage point of the present. In doing so, he argues, we erase the Egyptian agent from the account.[276]

But Hays is inconsistent and contradicts his own view. Elsewhere, he himself uses value-laden terms like 'good' and 'beneficial' to describe the afterlife to which the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom looked forward.[277] He says that the deceased were 'projected out of the ordinary sphere of day-to-day experience and into a transcendental, superhuman condition',[278] and that they aspired to become Osiris.[279] If he is right and it is impossible to learn anything about Egyptian expectations for the afterlife from the Pyramid Texts, then how can we know whether their hoped-for afterlife was good or not, in what condition the deceased expected to pass it, superhuman or otherwise, or which divinities, if any, they aspired to become?

I believe that Hays is wrong on both counts. It is not clear to me why seeking to investigate what the ancient Egyptians thought would happen to them after they died is a bad thing, provided that we limit ourselves to consideration of solid evidence and avoid speculation. Moreover, there is some paratextual material that we can bring to bear on this question. The fact that the Pyramid Texts have far fewer titles and colophons than the Coffin Texts does not mean that they have none.[280] Let us look at a few examples of this type.

[273] See Mathieu in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, pp. 244–5, with comments thereon by Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, p. 6; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 3–4; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, pp. 821–3; Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*, p. 78.

[274] Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 254.

[275] Ibid., p. 229. [276] ibid., p. 251.

[277] See, for example, ibid., pp. 16 and 262. [278] Ibid., p. 234.

[279] See references cited in note 252.

[280] Mostly these take the form of short titles and directions in offering spells, e.g. 'anoint, recite, place at his right hand', and so on. See A. Grimm, 'Titel und Vermerke in den Pyramidentexten', *SAK* 13 (1986), pp. 99–106. For what may be references to some spells by their titles in other spells, see ibid., pp. 105–6.

Pyramid Text Spell 456, preserved in the pyramids of Teti, Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II, is of considerable interest.[281] This is a hymn of praise addressed to a divinity, probably the sun god, who has power over the horizon and the sky. It is couched in the second person throughout. But it ends with the words: 'Whoever really knows it, this utterance of Re, and recites them, these magical utterances of Harakhti, he will be as one known by Re, he will be as a companion of Harakhti. NN will know it, this utterance of Re. NN will recite them, these magical utterances of Harakhti. NN will be as one known by Re, NN will be as a companion of Harakhti. The hand of NN will be taken to the sky among the following (*šms*) of Re.'[282] This colophon provides us with some significant paratextual information, not least what the spell is actually supposed to achieve, the impact that it is supposed to have in the world beyond the utterance. It informs us that the deceased king and the sun god are two distinct beings. The king is subordinate to the sun god. By reciting the spell he hopes to become an intimate of the sun god and join his following. Admission to this group is marked by a gesture, the taking of the deceased king's hand (*nḏr ꜥ*).

Another even more interesting example is Pyramid Text Spell 561B, which is only extant in the pyramid of Pepi I. This poorly preserved spell ends with the words: 'As for the one who will truly [worship] Osiris while performing/reciting this magic for him, he will live for ever. It is Pepi who worships you, Osiris. It [is Pepi who per]forms/recites [this] magic for you. [He will] live for ever.'[283] Once again we have a paratextual comment on the actual effect that the spell is supposed to have. What do we learn from this? The deceased king and Osiris are distinct beings. In their relationship, the king is subordinate to Osiris. By worshipping Osiris and reciting the spell, the king hopes to live for ever. The predicted result of this spell is the same as that of the preceding one: the deceased king will be subordinate to a deity, a member of his following or a worshipper, not identified with or transformed into him. Moreover, the ending makes it clear that whoever devotes himself to Osiris will share in that god's resurrection.

So we do have paratextual evidence in the Pyramid Text corpus that informs us in an unambiguous way about the sort of relationships that the king hoped to have with Re and Osiris in the afterlife. The next step is to ask whether these relationships are reflected in any of the Pyramid Text spells themselves. This is, in fact, the case. Several spells talk about the deceased king's hoped-for ascent to the sky and association with Re,[284] while in Spell 310 he is said to have come in the following of Osiris,[285]

[281] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, pp. 474–9.

[282] Ibid., pp. 477–9, §855a–856e. Noteworthy is the use of the term *ḥkꜣ* to describe the spell to which these words are appended. The same term is used to describe Spell 561B, discussed in the paragraph that follows.

[283] For this spell, see Pierre-Croisiau, *Les textes de la pyramide de Pépy 1er*, volume 2, plate 22, line 26; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 172. The latter's transliteration is inaccurate, since the verb *ꜥnḫ*, 'live', is given there twice as *ꜥnḏ*.

[284] See lists in Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 2, pp. 493–4 and 604–5.

[285] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 255, §493a.

and in Spell 477 he is said to perform services for that god.[286] This shows that, contra Hays, Pyramid Text spells can actually provide us with information about the deceased king's aspirations for the afterlife. We can be certain that the ones just cited do so, because what they say is corroborated by sources that are not subject to the ambiguities inherent in ritual speech.

The difficulty is how to recognize this information. How can we distinguish statements in Pyramid Text spells that are meant to be valid in the wider world beyond the immediate ritual context in which they were recited from those that are not? It follows from what has been said earlier in this section that, if a specific statement about the posthumous fate of the deceased in a Pyramid Text spell is paralleled in or corroborated by a paratextual remark like the two just quoted or in another less ambiguous Old Kingdom source outside the corpus of ritual utterances in the Pyramid Texts, then we are justified in accepting this statement as evidence of something that the Egyptians of that time actually hoped or expected would happen to the spell's beneficiary. But if that statement is contradicted by paratexual evidence, then it was probably deemed to be valid within the context of the ritual, but had no wider reality beyond the world of the spell. In other words, paratextual evidence is a more reliable guide to genuine Egyptian aspirations for the afterlife than the Pyramid Text spells themselves are, and should be given more weight accordingly.

3.9.2. Paratextual evidence from other Old Kingdom sources

What are the other, less ambiguous, Old Kingdom sources that we can compare with the Pyramid Texts? First of all, there is the canonical offering list mentioned in section 3.2.2. Specimens of this are preserved in private tombs as early as the fourth dynasty and, from the fifth dynasty onwards, in royal pyramid temples as well. The texts and representations associated with these make it clear that the items enumerated in the list were intended to provide the deceased's material needs in the hereafter. Since the offering list is duplicated in Pyramid Text Spells 23, 25, 32, 72–92, 94–96, and 108–171,[287] which also include the utterances to be recited in conjunction with the presentation of its constituent items, the spells in question provide us with clear evidence of belief in an afterlife where the deceased king required things of this sort, which it was their function to supply.

Another less ambiguous Old Kingdom source is represented by the offering formulas in private tombs analysed in section 3.6. As we have seen, these often express the hope or expectation that the deceased will receive material sustenance from Osiris and other gods like Anubis, or participate in festivals where such sustenance is provided. But they

[286] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 39–42, §964b–c, 966b–c, 967b–c, and 968b–c.

[287] See Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, pp. 8–9.

also include other wishes which shed further light on the sort of things to which the deceased aspired in Old Kingdom Egypt. These can be divided into four main categories: (1) wishes centring around the concept of *imakh* (possessing this status, partaking of offerings given to the *imakhu*, travelling on the ways travelled by the *imakhu*, being guided on these ways, going to the field of offerings (a celestial region) and the good places among the *imakhu*, coming to the west as a possessor of *imakh*, ascending to the great god among the *imakhu*, being *imakh* before various gods, including Osiris);[288] (2) wishes focusing on the concept of *akh* (being an *akh* or the beneficiary of *sakhu*, glorification spells, recited by the lector priest, crossing the firmament among the excellent *akhs*);[289] (3) wishes centring around the concept of justification (travelling on the ways travelled by the *imakhu* and the justified, being *imakh* before the great god, the lord of judgement, being just in the heart of Osiris, being justified (*mꜣʿ-ḫrw*) before the great god);[290] and (4) wishes focusing on the ability to travel to the sky and be with the sun god (going to the field of offerings and the good places among the *imakhu*, going to the sky, crossing the firmament among the excellent *akhs*, ascending to the great god, being *imakhu* before the lord of the sky, having the great god take (*šsp*) one's hand, having Re take (*šsp*) one's hand).[291]

It is significant that these categories are by no means totally separate, since some wishes combine ideas or concepts from more than one of them. For example, the deceased wish to cross the firmament among the excellent *akhs* (2 and 4), travel on the ways travelled by the *imakhu* and the justified (1 and 3), go to the field of offerings among the *imakhu* (1 and 4), and so on. So, in fact, from this source alone, we can obtain quite a considerable amount of information about the aspirations of Old Kingdom Egyptians for the afterlife, which is not subject to the uncertainties of interpretation that we face when dealing with ritual spells like those found in the Pyramid Texts. The offering formulas in which these wishes appear make it clear that these are all things that their intended beneficiaries hoped to do, experience, or have others do for them in the world beyond the tomb.

3.9.3. 'Non-royal' offering formulas and 'royal' Pyramid Texts

But how are these offering formulas relevant to the Pyramid Texts, since they were inscribed for the benefit of private individuals rather than kings? They are relevant because there are definite connections between the four categories of wishes that we have identified in non-royal offering formulas and what we find in the Pyramid Texts. First of all, there are notable similarities between these wishes and the paratextual evidence that we have found in the Pyramid Text corpus itself. The offering formula wishes clearly distinguish between the deceased and the sun god. So does the colophon

[288] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 8, 10, 16–17, 19, 26–8, and 30–2.
[289] Ibid., pp. 10, 27–9, and 30.
[290] Ibid., pp. 17, 19, and 31.
[291] Ibid., pp. 28, 30–2; Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, p. 70.

of Pyramid Text Spell 456. Both wishes and colophon make it clear that the dead person is subordinate to the solar deity. The wishes express the hope that the deceased will ascend to the sky and that his hand will be taken by Re. Likewise the colophon of Spell 456 says that whoever recites that utterance will be as one known by Re and his hand will be taken to the sky among that god's following. This implies that the following of Re must include other dead people who have recited the utterance previously, and in fact another wish found in offering formulas is that the deceased's hand be grasped by his *kas* and his fathers.[292] In both wishes and colophon, the acceptance of the deceased among the followers of the sun god is marked by the gesture of taking or grasping his hand.

As we saw, the end of Pyramid Text Spell 561B is very much like the colophon of Spell 456, except the god involved is Osiris rather than Re. Here too there are notable similarities with the wishes found in non-royal offering formulas. The wishes clearly distinguish Osiris and the deceased. In them they are always two separate entities. The same is true of the colophon at the end of Pyramid Text Spell 561B. The wishes make it clear that the deceased is subordinate to Osiris, since he is dependent upon him, and so does the colophon, where the deceased king is said to worship the god. The wishes clearly presuppose that the deceased will live for ever to enjoy the various benefits wished for, and the end of Spell 561B says that whoever worships Osiris and performs or recites magic for him will live for ever. So in terms of content, there is quite a bit of overlap between the wishes and the paratextual material in the Pyramid Texts, even though the latter is scant.

But this is not all. In fact, we can find good parallels for all of the major themes that we have identified in the private offering formula wishes within actual Pyramid Text spells as well. A number of those utterances connect the deceased king with the status of *imakh*. He has it conferred upon him (Spell 535).[293] He becomes a possessor of *imakh* and joins a larger group of possessors of *imakh*, just as the beneficiaries of the offering formulas hope to do (438, 554, 614).[294] The deceased king is also an *akh*, is transfigured into one, enjoys a place among other *akhs*, and has *sakhu* recited for him.[295] Equally important in the Pyramid Texts is the concept of justification. The deceased king is righteous (*mꜣʿ*) on earth and in the sky (517),[296] he desires justification (260),[297] he and his *ka* are said to have been justified before the god (266, 473).[298] And

[292] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 31. For the connection between *kas* and fathers here, see sections 1.2.3 and 2.1.3.

[293] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 222, §1289a.

[294] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 448, §811e; Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 249, §1371c, and 417, §1741b.

[295] See examples cited in Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 2, pp. 489, 542, and 577.

[296] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 163, §1188c.

[297] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 172, §316d.

[298] Ibid., p. 189, §361c; Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 19, §935a. For further references to the deceased king's justification, see Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 2, pp. 623–4; Morales in Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures*, p. 118.

of course ascent to the sky is a common motif in Pyramid Text utterances, as we have already seen.[299]

What is striking is not simply that the same themes found in offering formula wishes in Old Kingdom private tombs occur in Pyramid Text spells as well. They actually cluster together in the same groups in the Pyramid Texts as they do in the private offering formulas. Pyramid Text Spell 519, for example, enjoins that the deceased king be allowed to sit down because of his righteousness and stand up because of his status as *imakh*.[300] The spell also says that he should go to the field of offerings in the sky by virtue of the latter status.[301] Thus we have a cluster of three themes: *imakh*, justification, and travel to the sky. In Spell 554, the deceased king is said to be among the possessors of *imakh* and belong to those who surround Re (*imakh* and intimacy with the sun god).[302] In Spell 438, owing to his status as one of the possessors of *imakh*, the deceased king receives meat from the slaughtering blocks of Khentiamentiu (*imakh* and partaking of offerings).[303] In Spell 609 he goes to the west as a possessor of *imakh* (*imakh* and going to the west).[304]

Furthermore, in Pyramid Text Spell 517 the theme of righteousness is linked with the wish to be ferried over to the field of the great god where he provides the *imakhu* with sustenance (righteousness, *imakh*, partaking of offerings, and ascent to the great god).[305] In Spell 473 justification (*mꜣʿ-ḫrw*) is linked with going to the sky.[306] Likewise in Spell 266 the deceased king and his *ka* are justified before the god and Re takes him to the sky,[307] while in the similar Spell 265 he goes to the sky justified and the wish is expressed that his name be announced to Re (justification, travel to the sky, intimacy with the sun god).[308] In all of these examples drawn from Pyramid Text spells, it can be argued that we have valid evidence for Old Kingdom aspirations for the afterlife, simply because each statement cited from the Pyramid Texts above is paralleled in one or more less ambiguous sources outside that corpus where it clearly represents such an aspiration.

Why should this be? Why is there such a significant amount of agreement between these two bodies of texts, royal and non-royal? The most obvious explanation is that both draw upon a common source. In other words, the spells inscribed inside royal pyramids and the offering formulas inscribed in private tombs reflect the same basic conception of the afterlife. If true, this would provide further support for the view already expressed in section 2.10 that rulers and subjects shared common aspirations for the hereafter during the Old Kingdom. Was this really the case? Detailed examination of this question is reserved for the next chapter. What is more important here is to recognize the contribution that private tomb inscriptions can make to the task of

[299] See reference cited in note 284.
[300] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 185–6, §1219a–b.
[301] Ibid., p. 173, §1203d–e.
[302] Ibid., p. 249, §1371c–1372a.
[303] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 448, §811d–e.
[304] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 398, §1703b.
[305] Ibid., pp. 165–6, §1191a–c.
[306] Ibid., p. 14, §928–929a.
[307] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 189, §361c–362a.
[308] Ibid., pp. 186–7, §353a, 354a, and 356a–c.

recovering information from Pyramid Text spells about what their intended beneficiaries hoped would happen to them in the next world. In sections 3.8.1 and 3.8.3, the need to view the Pyramid Text corpus from a diachronic perspective, as part of a continuum of ritual utterances extending over several centuries, was emphasized. As the offering formulas in private tomb inscriptions show, it is no less essential to view this corpus from a synchronic perspective, as part of a range of texts dealing with the afterlife that were in use concurrently during the Old Kingdom, each of which can contribute to a better understanding of the others.

3.9.4. Resolving the paradox of the Pyramid Texts

As we have seen, Pyramid Text spells configure the relationship between Osiris and the deceased king in two different ways. Some assert that the king is distinct from Osiris, others identify him with that god. Some spells do both. In the paratextual evidence at our disposal, however, the king is distinct from Osiris, thus contradicting statements in Pyramid Text spells that identify him with the god. This means that the king's identification with Osiris was ritually contingent, valid within the context of the rite in which it was asserted, but not in the world beyond the spell. That is why we find no corroborating references to it in texts outside the ritual sphere.

Conversely, statements in Pyramid Text spells that distinguish the king and Osiris are corroborated in sources from outside that sphere, and thus may be regarded as evidence of the sort of relationship with that god that the king actually expected to have in the afterlife. When we recognize this distinction between what is ritually contingent and what is meant to apply beyond the boundaries of the ritual domain, the paradox of the nature of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased king in the Pyramid Text corpus is resolved. Within those boundaries, the two can be identified or distinguished, depending upon the particular ritual context and its needs. Beyond them, god and king are invariably two discrete entities, mirroring the relationship between Osiris and the ruler's subjects.

3.10. THE LOCUTION *WS'IR* NN

Before we finish, we need to look at one final problem. In a number of Pyramid Text spells, the name of the deceased king is preceded by that of Osiris. Thus we find the locution *Wsi̯r* NN. There are even cases where the name of the god was inadvertently omitted before the king's name and then inserted later, so we know that this must have been of some significance.[309] We need to consider two questions. The first is how we

[309] Mathieu, *BIFAO* 96 (1996), p. 301, notes a case where 'Unis' has been changed to '*Wsi̯r* Unis' on the north wall of the passage between the burial chamber and the antechamber of his pyramid, because the king

should translate this sequence. Two alternatives have been proposed. The first is 'Osiris NN', taking the name of the god and that of the king as two nouns standing in apposition. The second is 'Osiris of NN', taking them as two nouns forming a direct genitival construction.[310] The second question that we have to consider is whether the locution *Wsỉr* NN, however we choose to translate it, constitutes evidence that the deceased king was identified with Osiris as some have maintained.[311] I propose to postpone consideration of the first question until Chapter 6, where it will be more convenient to assemble and present all the relevant evidence.[312] Here we will focus solely upon the second question.

3.10.1. *Wsỉr* NN as an expression of the deceased's identity with Osiris?

In my opinion, there is ample evidence to prove that prefixing the name of Osiris to that of the deceased king does not constitute an expression of identity.[313] There is a simple test. We can look, for instance, at the version of Coffin Text Spell 36 inscribed on the outer coffin of Sepi from el-Bersha, now in the Louvre. This begins with an address to the god Osiris in which he is told that *Wsỉr* NN has come before him that he might see his beauty, worship him, serve him, dispel his injuries, and order (*sm;ʿ*) his movements in his form as a divine spirit.[314] There could be no clearer proof that prefixing the name of Osiris to that of the deceased does not serve to identify the latter with the god. In fact, versions of this spell on other coffins simply say that NN has come to do all these things for Osiris, showing that NN and *Wsỉr* NN stand in precisely the same relationship to the deity. The latter is not a composite or syncretism of Osiris and the deceased but the deceased himself, distinct from the god and therefore free to interact with him in the ways that the text specifies.

What is more, throughout most of Egyptian history, we can find texts for the afterlife in which this free variation between NN and *Wsỉr* NN is attested. The main exception is

is invariably so designated on the north wall of the burial chamber and in the passage between it and the antechamber.

[310] See M. Smith, 'Osiris NN or Osiris of NN?', in B. Backes, I. Munro, and S. Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen: Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuch-Symposiums 2005* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 325–37.

[311] See e.g. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 231.

[312] See section 6.6, where it is argued that *Wsỉr* NN should be translated 'Osiris of NN'. The earliest evidence pertinent to this question is considered briefly in section 4.10.4.3 as well.

[313] For others who have expressed the same view, see e.g. B. Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten* (Wiesbaden, 1975), p. 42; E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, 1982), p. 192; F. Servajean, *Les formules des transformations du Livre des Morts à la lumière d'une théorie de la performativité* (Cairo, 2003), pp. 52–4. The last gives a useful survey of the views of other scholars on this subject.

[314] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1 (Chicago, 1935), pp. 135–7a.

in the Pyramid Texts and, to a lesser extent, in the Coffin Texts as well, where the use of *Wsi̯r* NN is restricted to certain contexts, primarily that of offering.[315] Above all else, in its earliest attestations, the locution *Wsi̯r* NN designates the deceased as the recipient of offerings in an offering ritual.[316] Even here, however, it can vary with simple NN in invocations of this type, so clearly identification with Osiris was not a prerequisite for receiving offerings or other forms of sustenance in the afterlife. Compare, for example, in the pyramid of Unis, Spells 37 and 51, where the king is addressed simply as NN, and Spells 38 and 49, which address him as *Wsi̯r* NN.[317] In Pyramid Text Spell 25, the deceased king is addressed in the second person both as NN and *Wsi̯r* NN, at the same time being clearly distinguished from Osiris who is referred to in the third person, which rules the possibility of any genuine identification out of court.[318]

3.10.2. Early expansion in the use of the locution *Wsi̯r* NN

Although in the pyramid of Unis the use of *Wsi̯r* NN is restricted to relatively short utterances in the offering ritual and related rites in the burial chamber and the passage between it and the antechamber, already in the next inscribed pyramid, that of Teti, we see this beginning to change. There the king is also called *Wsi̯r* NN in lengthier spells addressed to him on the walls of the antechamber, for example, Spells 364 and 366–372.[319] In the pyramid of Pepi I there is a further development in the use of the locution: it appears in both offering spells and non-offering spells addressed to the king in the burial chamber, antechamber, corridor, and vestibule, betokening an evolving and more complex form of association between him and the deity than before. The utterances in question include Spells 426–428, 435, 474, 482, 483, 487, 532, 561B, 578–579, 611, 612, and 694A, where *Wsi̯r* NN can vary with simple NN.[320] We also find the locution in vestibule spells where the king is referred to in the third person, thus no longer only in addresses to him. These include Spells 541–542, 544, 548, and 556, where

[315] H. Willems, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418)* (Leuven, 1996), p. 83; N. Billing, *Nut the Goddess of Life in Text and Iconography* (Uppsala, 2002), p. 183; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 182; section 4.10.1.

[316] Cf. H. Fischer, 'A Stela of the Herakleopolitan Period at Saqqara: The Osiris *'Iti*', *ZÄS* 90 (1963), p. 37; Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, p. 230 note 49; G. Rudnitzky, *Die Aussage über 'Das Auge des Horus': Eine altägyptische Art geistiger Äusserung nach dem Zeugnis des Alten Reiches* (Copenhagen, 1956), pp. 39–41.

[317] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, pp. 20–1 and 24.

[318] Ibid., pp. 10–12.

[319] Ibid., pp. 327–33 and 337–58 (these spells do not occur in the pyramid of Unis). It is worth noting that in the similar spells 365 and 373 (ibid., pp. 334–7 and 358–62), Teti is simply called NN.

[320] See ibid., pp. 425–7 and 432; Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 22–7, 62–7, 67–73, 83–4, 210–14, 326–9; Pierre-Croisiau, *Les textes de la pyramide de Pépy 1er*, volume 2, plate 22, lines 23–6, 68–71, and 76–81. The versions of Spells 474, 482, and 487 in the pyramids of Merenre and Pepi II have NN instead of the *Wsi̯r* NN found in the versions of this pyramid.

once again *Wsi̯r* NN can vary with NN.[321] The locution continues to be used in an ever wider range of contexts throughout the rest of Egyptian history.[322]

3.10.3. The gender of NN in the locution *Wsi̯r* NN

In the spells inscribed inside pyramids of the Old Kingdom, *Wsi̯r* can precede the names of both kings and queens. It is interesting to note that when the latter are addressed as *Wsi̯r* NN, the personal pronouns used to refer to them are normally masculine rather than feminine. Thus in the offering spells in the pyramid of Neith, the vocative *Wsi̯r Nt* is regularly followed by the injunction *mn n=k* X, 'take X for yourself', rather than *mn n=ṯ* X.[323] The same is true of the Pyramid Texts of Iput and Wedjebten.[324] Some might see this as support for the view that the locution *Wsi̯r* NN really does reflect a genuine identification between the deceased and Osiris: the queen is referred to with masculine pronouns because she has acquired a new gender as a consequence of her identification with a male deity.

But this is easily disproved. Even when the queen is designated as NN rather than *Wsi̯r* NN, reference is still made to her with masculine pronouns. In the Pyramid Texts of Neith, for example, she is regularly referred to as *Nt pn*, 'this Neith', using the masculine singular demonstrative rather than the feminine singular *tn*.[325] The same is true in the Pyramid Texts of Iput and Wedjebten.[326] The reason for this is that, as Allen has noted, the masculine pronouns in these texts were taken over mechanically from copies of Pyramid Text spells originally intended for kings, and only occasionally were they altered to the more appropriate feminine ones.[327]

Even where pronouns were changed, this was not always done in a careful or consistent way. See, for instance, this extract from Pyramid Text Spell 474 in the pyramid of Neith, where it is said of her: *pr=s i̯r p.t m-m sbꜣ.w m-m i̯ḫm.w-sk ꜣt=f tp=f šfšf.t=f i̯r gs=f ḥkꜣw=f i̯r rd.wy=f šm Nt pn i̯m=f ḫr mw.t=s Nw.t*, 'She will go forth to the sky among the stars, among those who know not destruction, his (*sic*) power upon him (*sic*), his (*sic*) awesomeness alongside him (*sic*), his (*sic*) magic at his (*sic*) feet. This Neith will proceed thereby to her mother Nut.'[328] In this extract we have eight suffix pronouns referring to the queen. The first and last have been changed from third person singular masculine to the more appropriate third person singular feminine, but

[321] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 238–42 and 253–7. It should be noted that the third person references to the king are original in these spells. They have not been altered from the first person.

[322] Cf. section 6.6.7.1; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 167 and 231.

[323] See G. Jéquier, *Les pyramides des reines Neit et Apouit* (Cairo, 1933), plates 8–12.

[324] See ibid., plate 39, fragment 11; G. Jéquier, *La pyramide d'Oudjebten* (Cairo, 1928), plate 7.

[325] See e.g. Jéquier, *Les pyramides des reines Neit et Apouit*, plate 7, lines 19, 20, 21, 22, and *passim*; plate 15, lines 406, 407, 410, 411, and *passim*.

[326] See ibid., plate 38, fragments 5 and 8; plate 39, fragments 26–7; Jéquier, *La pyramide d'Oudjebten*, plate 7.

[327] J. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Atlanta, 2005), p. 310.

[328] Jéquier, *Les pyramides des reines Neit et Apouit*, plate 8, line 18, and plate 7, line 19.

the intervening six have been left as they were originally. As a result, we find masculine and feminine suffix pronouns alternating with each other in the same sentence, and one could hardly argue that these marked fluctuations in the deceased's gender.[329]

3.10.4. *Wsi̯r* NN as an expression of the deceased's status as a dependent of Osiris

If *Wsi̯r* NN does not express any form of identification between Osiris and the deceased, then what sort of relationship with the god does it express? As we have seen, the use of this locution was changing and developing even during the Old Kingdom. It is used in more areas of the pyramid of Teti than it is in that of Unis, and in more areas and a wider range of spell types (not just offering spells addressed to the deceased king) in the pyramid of Pepi I than it is in either of those two monuments. But its original context, as far as we can be certain, was that of the offering ritual, where it was used by the ritualist in direct addresses to the deceased, thereby denoting them as recipients of offerings presented in a ritual context. The locution specified that they would receive these under the auspices of Osiris. In this respect, the fact that it marked dependency on that god for sustenance, but also entitlement to it by virtue of association with him, it is not unlike the epithet '*imakh* before Osiris' or the offering formula in which Osiris is named as a donor that we find in contemporary private tomb inscriptions.[330]

The locution *Wsi̯r* NN does not appear in these until the latter part of the Old Kingdom, when we begin to find it on the walls of private burial chambers.[331] The precise date of the earliest example of this locution from a non-royal monument is uncertain, owing to the difficulties that we face in dating private tombs of this period.[332] There are, nevertheless, some instances that can be assigned to the sixth dynasty with confidence. Several occur in the tomb of Idi/Tepemkau from Saqqara, dating to the middle of the reign of Pepi II.[333] Additional examples occur in the tombs of Seni and Khabaukhnum/Biu, also from Saqqara, which can be assigned to the end of

[329] For further discussion of the phenomenon of variation in the gender of personal pronouns in texts for the afterlife, see section 4.10.2.

[330] For the connection between receiving offerings and being associated with Osiris as a member of his following, see Billing, *Nut The Goddess of Life in Text and Iconography*, p. 32.

[331] For early examples of this locution in private tomb inscriptions, see K. Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 117–18 and 187; Fischer, *ZÄS* 90 (1963), pp. 35–8; Fischer in Berger and Mathieu (eds), *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer*, pp. 181, 184, and 188–9; Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods*, p. 131; A. Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom* (Wiesbaden, 1997), p. 186; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, p. 665 note 1934; Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, p. 219. The last author cites an example of *Wsi̯r* NN from P. Duell, *The Mastaba of Mereruka* 2 (Chicago, 1938), plate 113, but I think this is rather the epithet *imꜣḫ n Wsi̯r NN*, 'the revered one of Osiris, NN', for which, see Lapp, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches*, p. 211.

[332] For these problems, see section 3.3.1.

[333] G. Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains de Pepi II* (Cairo, 1929), p. 18, figures 14 and 15. For the date, see E. Brovarski, 'The Late Old Kingdom at South Saqqara', in L. Pantalacci and

that reign or its aftermath.[334] Slightly later in the Old Kingdom, we have instances of the locution *Wsi̯r* NN from the tombs of Iri, Penu, and Meru/Bebi, all of which date to the eighth dynasty.[335]

Not surprisingly, all of these examples occur in phrases designating the tomb owner as the recipient of offerings in a ritual context. Thus the usage of the locution *Wsi̯r* NN in private tombs is very much like what we see in the earliest inscribed royal pyramids. As was true in the pyramids, the locution appears to have been an optional element which could be omitted if circumstances dictated. In the burial chamber of Penu, for instance, the items that comprise the list of offerings are arranged in three horizontal rows of short vertical columns, with twenty-nine columns in each row. Immediately below each item, the preposition *n*, 'to, for', followed by the tomb owner's name, is inscribed, indicating that he is the intended recipient of the item listed just above it. In the first two rows, every occurrence of the tomb owner's name is preceded by *Wsi̯r*. In the third row, however, the one closest to the floor of the chamber, this is only true of the first ten occurrences of his name. In the remaining nineteen, the element *Wsi̯r* has been omitted, along with the preposition *n*, since the available space did not permit their insertion. Evidently here, as in the Pyramid Texts, the addition of *Wsi̯r* before the deceased's name was not obligatory.

As we have seen, there are similarities in meaning between the locution *Wsi̯r* NN, the epithet '*imakh* before Osiris', and the offering formula in which Osiris is named as a donor, since all three associate the deceased with the god in a particular type of relationship where the deity looks after them and provides their needs. These similarities probably account for the fact that the name of the deceased is never preceded by *Wsi̯r* in the two latter contexts in the Old Kingdom. In the horizontal band of text above the offering list in the tomb of Meru/Bebi, for example, the deceased bears the epithet '*imakh* before Osiris' and his titles and name follow immediately thereafter, with no intervening *Wsi̯r*. Likewise, in the examples of the *ḥtp di̯ nswt* formula with Osiris as donor in the tomb of Penu, he is called simply that. There is no *Wsi̯r* before his name.[336] The same is true in the tombs of Idi/Tepemkau and Seni.[337] In all of these burial chambers, there is a clear pattern of complementary distribution.[338] *Wsi̯r* NN is employed in certain contexts, NN alone in others, but in the latter the deceased are related to Osiris in other ways so that the insertion of *Wsi̯r* before their names would have been otiose. Brovarski wondered why the locution *Wsi̯r* NN was not employed

C. Berger-El-Naggar (eds), *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep: Travaux archéologiques en cours sur la fin de la VIe dynastie et la Première Période Intermédiaire* (Lyon, 2005), p. 63.

[334] Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains de Pepi II*, plate 3; G. Jéquier, *Le monument funéraire de Pepi II*, volume 3 (Cairo, 1940), plate 52; Brovarski in Pantalacci and Berger-El-Naggar (eds), *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep*, p. 63.

[335] G. Jéquier, *Deux pyramides du Moyen Empire* (Cairo, 1933), p. 40; Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains de Pepi II*, p. 44, figure 48; J. Capart, *Chambre funéraire de la sixième dynastie aux Musées Royaux du Cinquantenaire* (Brussels, 1906), p. 13 and plate 1.

[336] See Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains de Pepi II*, pp. 42 and 46–7.

[337] Ibid., p. 14 and plate 3.

[338] Cf. Fischer, *ZÄS* 90 (1963), p. 37.

more widely than it was by non-royal individuals in the Old Kingdom.[339] One reason is that, as we have seen, its use was restricted to certain types of ritual utterance. Perhaps another reason was that they did not need to employ it, since they already had epithets like '*imakh* before Osiris' at their disposal, which provided alternative ways of signalling their relationship with that deity in terms that were more or less synonymous with those expressed by the locution *Wsir* NN.

3.11. CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this chapter, two questions were posed. The first was: how and when did belief in Osiris originate? The oldest securely dated attestations of the name of Osiris are assignable to the middle of the fifth dynasty, specifically the reign of Reneferef. But we should not rule out the possibility that belief in him existed in earlier periods, prior to the first explicit references to him by name. The most we can say is that we have no convincing evidence that it did at present. Although it is of interest that references to Osiris appear in non-royal sources before they do in royal ones, this is probably not significant. As we have seen, the fact that something is attested in the non-royal sphere first is no proof that this is where it originated, just as the fact that something is attested in the royal sphere first does not prove that it originated there.

Various etymologies for the name Osiris have been proposed. However, none have been found convincing. Thus they cannot provide us with clues about the god's origin. Nor do orthographies of the name help in this respect. The earliest examples are determined with a seated bearded figure. The beard worn by this figure is the long curved divine beard, sometimes shown with a knob at the end. It appears in representations of indigenenous Egyptian deities as early as the third dynasty, well before the first appearance of Osiris. This beard is different to the shorter straight beard seen in Egyptian representations of foreigners. Thus it does not provide evidence that Osiris was originally a human being of foreign origin, as one argument would have it.

No ancient Egyptian sources record how or in what circumstances belief in Osiris arose. There has been much modern speculation on this subject. Many theories project belief in the deity back into the remote past, well before we actually have any evidence for it. None of these can be proven, or even tested in a meaningful way. However, a few theories associate the entry of Osiris into the Egyptian pantheon with developments that occurred around the time of his initial appearance in the historical record. According to one view, the rise of Osiris in the middle of the fifth dynasty was connected to the demise of solar temples. Another view relates it to the proliferation of claims to be an *akh* and possess the powers and privileges inherent in that status in private tomb inscriptions of this time. Yet another hypothesis is that the sudden

[339] Brovarski in Pantalacci and Berger-El-Naggar (eds), *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep*, p. 63.

appearance of Osiris and the diffusion of his cult throughout Egypt were the result of a state ordinance. The central authority created the god in order to promote political stability and encourage support for the royal family. Thus belief in Osiris was a tool used by that authority to ensure its power and longevity. This chapter has examined the evidence for each of these views in turn. None has been found compelling.

A number of innovations in the areas of belief in and provision for the afterlife are known to have taken place in and around the reign of Niuserre, of which the initial appearance of Osiris in the written record shortly before he came to the throne could be a further example. But this need not mean that it was due to royal impetus. It was shown in section 3.5.4 that the period around the reign of Niuserre is particularly notable for the innovations in the non-royal funerary sphere that it witnessed. Perhaps the introduction of Osiris was another such innovation. We may not be able to say precisely how or why belief in that god first arose, but we should keep an open mind about the context in which it originated.

The second question posed at the beginning of this chapter was: what is the nature of the relationship envisaged between Osiris and the deceased in the earliest sources that associate the two? In the earliest non-royal sources of this nature, private tomb inscriptions, Osiris and the dead are clearly distinct entities, but there is a relationship between them whereby the latter are dependent upon the former for their needs in the afterlife. This relationship is expressed by means of epithets like '*imakh* before Osiris' and the *ḥtp dỉ nswt* offering formula in which the god is named as a donor. Osiris is not the only god on whom the deceased depend, however. He provides their requirements in parallel with other deities, some of whom, like Anubis, are already attested in this role prior to Osiris.

The earliest royal sources that attest to a relationship between the god and the dead are the Pyramid Texts. Here too we find spells that make a clear distinction between deceased and deity. The situation in this corpus is more complicated, however, because there are also spells that identify the dead king with Osiris. There is no discernible pattern in the usage of these two different ways of relating the deceased ruler to Osiris. There do not seem to be any criteria, whether of date, location within the pyramid, or spell type, that allow us to predict whether a given utterance will treat the king and the deity as distinct entities or identify the two. In fact, what we find is that the dead ruler can be both distinguished from and identified with Osiris in the same spell. Moreover, Osiris is not the only god with whom the king shares this complicated, apparently contradictory, relationship. Some of the same Pyramid Text spells that appear to identify the deceased king with Osiris identify him with other deities as well. Sometimes the king is identified with several deities in a single spell. But he can also be distinguished from those divinities.

The explanation for these apparent contradictions is that the Pyramid Texts are ritual utterances, not expositions of theology or treatises describing what the ancient Egyptians thought the afterlife would be like. As such, the statements that they make are functional, designed to make things happen. This is true of all ancient Egyptian ritual texts, so it is important for our understanding of the Pyramid Texts that we view

them as part of a continuum of works of this nature. One important technique used in Egyptian ritual texts of all periods is identification. A ritualist identifies himself as someone or something else. Alternatively, he identifies another person or object as someone or something else.

The purpose of spells employing this technique is not to transform the ritualist or another person permanently into another being, or change a given object permanently into another one. Rather, their goal is something completely different: to confer some benefit upon an individual or invest a person or thing with a specific power. Thus claims of identity with another being or attribution of such identity to another are a means to an end, not an end themselves. They are valid within the framework of the ritual but not outside of it. That is why we sometimes find two seemingly contradictory identifications, or identifications with more than one being, asserted in the same ritual utterance. The identities claimed or attributed are impermanent and transitory. What endure are the consequences, the effects, of the attribution of these identities, not the identities as such.

If we interpret the Pyramid Texts as ritual utterances that employ this technique, then many of their apparent inconsistences are resolved. In particular, those spells that identify the deceased king with Osiris become more comprehensible. But this approach gives rise to a different problem. If a spell that identifies the deceased king with Osiris or another deity is not supposed to transform him into Osiris or that other deity, then what is it supposed to do? More generally, if the contents of a spell are not a reliable guide to its function, then how can we determine what its function was? Beyond the words of the spell and the ritual context in which they were recited, the Egyptians believed that there was a wider reality, a world beyond the spell. How can we discover what impact the recitation of the spell was supposed to have in this world?

One important indicator of this is paratextual evidence, for example, titles and colophons. Although relatively rare in the Pyramid Texts, such notices are valuable since they tell us in a straightforward way what a given ritual utterance is actually supposed to do. They comment upon the function of the spells without being embedded in their ritual context. Thus their interpretation is not subject to the same ambiguities that hinder our understanding of the utterances to which they are attached.

The colophons of Pyramid Text Spells 456 and 561B are of particular interest. According to the first, whoever knows and recites the spell will be an intimate of the sun god and join his following. According to the second, whoever worships Osiris and recites the spell for him will live for ever. Thus the colophons state explicitly what the spells to which they are attached are supposed to achieve. The desired result in both cases is that the deceased be subordinate to a deity, a member of his following or a worshipper, not identified with or transformed into him.

The divine–human relationships envisaged in these colophons are reflected in some Pyramid Text spells as well. Thus those spells provide us with reliable information about Egyptian aspirations for the afterlife. But how can we recognize such information and distinguish it from what is merely ritually contingent? Paratextual evidence provides us with a useful means of doing this. If a specific statement about the fate of

the deceased king in a Pyramid Text spell is paralleled either in a remark like those in the colophons of Spells 456 and 561B, or in another less ambiguous Old Kingdom source or sources outside the corpus of the Pyramid Texts, then we are justified in accepting this statement as evidence of something that the Egyptians of that time actually hoped or expected would happen to the spell's beneficiary in the hereafter. But if that statement is contradicted by such paratextual evidence, then it was probably only valid in the context of the ritual and had no wider reality beyond the world of the spell.

What less ambiguous Old Kingdom sources outside the Pyramid Texts do we have to help us identify statements that reflect genuine Egyptian hopes for the afterlife in the spells of that corpus? The most important are the wishes in offering formulas in contemporary private tombs, since they give us a very good idea of the things to which the non-royal deceased aspired during that period. Strikingly, we can find direct parallels for all of these both in the paratextual evidence we have identified within the Pyramid Text corpus and in actual Pyramid Text spells. Not only are the same hopes and aspirations found in private offering formulas reflected in those utterances as well, they cluster together in the same groups in the Pyramid Texts as they do in the private offering formulas, indicating that both drew upon a common source. This provides further support for the view already expressed in section 2.10, that rulers and subjects shared common aspirations for the hereafter during the Old Kingdom, a point we will examine in more detail in the following chapter. It also demonstrates the importance of viewing the Pyramid Texts from a synchronic perspective, as part of a range of texts dealing with the afterlife that were in use concurrently during the Old Kingdom, each of which can help to elucidate the others.

Based on the evidence presented in this chapter, it would appear that the relationship between Osiris and the dead envisaged in the Pyramid Texts was fundamentally the same as that envisaged in contemporary private tomb inscriptions. The deceased, whether royal or non-royal, were distinct from the god and subordinate to him.[340] The paratextual evidence of the colophon of Spell 561B, which states that whoever worships Osiris, royal or non-royal, will live for ever, shows that already at this date those who devoted themselves to the god could expect to share in his resurrection. By contrast, statements in some Pyramid Text spells to the effect that the deceased king is Osiris or will become Osiris, like those identifying him with other deities, were considered to be valid in the specific context of the ritual during which they were uttered, but not beyond this. They are not corroborated by paratextual evidence and

[340] That Egyptians of later periods also considered the rulers of the Old Kingdom to stand in the same relation to Osiris as their subjects did is demonstrated by graffiti left by New Kingdom visitors to the pyramid complex of Djoser at North Saqqara. According to the emic perspective of those who wrote these graffiti, the pyramid complex was part of the domain of Osiris, and they used the occasion of their visits there to address prayers to him and the other gods of the afterlife. Djoser, by contrast, was prayed for rather than prayed to. Visitors to his complex recited the offering formula for him in the same way that they did for non-royal tomb owners. See H. Navrátilová, *The Visitors' Graffiti of Dynasties XVIII and XIX in Abusir and Northern Saqqara* (Prague, 2007), pp. 74–9, 108–11, and 116–17; Quack, *Sokar* 23 (2011), pp. 54–5.

thus cannot be used to argue that rulers expected to have a different relationship with the god in the hereafter than their subjects did.

Likewise, the locution *Wsi̯r* NN, in which the name of the deceased is preceded by that of Osiris, does not indicate identity between them. The use of this locution, first attested in royal pyramids at Saqqara and subsequently in private tombs there and elsewhere, was restricted to certain contexts. It served initially to identify the dead as recipients of sustenance under the auspices of Osiris, although it soon came to be a more generic marker of the deceased's association with the god. In this respect, the locution *Wsi̯r* NN is not unlike the epithet '*imakh* before Osiris' or the *ḥtp di̯ nswt* offering formula in which Osiris is named as a donor, and its pattern of distribution is complementary to theirs.

In 'unreading' a text or corpus of texts, one attempts to show that a previous reading is incorrect.[341] At its most basic, a reading is simply a translation; in other words, it is concerned with what a text says. On another level, it involves interpretation, what a text is about. Finally, a reading can be concerned with purpose or function: what a text is for and what it is supposed to do. Unreading can work at any or all of these three levels. In the course of unreading the Pyramid Texts in this chapter, we have identified certain problems with previous readings of that corpus. In particular, we have focused upon the type of reading that assumes Pyramid Text spells are a sort of menu or blueprint setting out what the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom wanted to happen to them after they died, where every statement can be taken at face value. But in fact the Pyramid Texts are composed of ritual utterances and should be read and interpreted as such. Only a reading of this nature, one which recognizes the distinction between what is ritually contingent and what is meant to apply beyond the boundaries of the ritual domain, can help to resolve the apparent paradoxes with which that corpus confronts us.

So who is Osiris? The question can be understood in two different ways. On the one hand, it can be interpreted as asking: who is the god that we call Osiris, what is he like, what is his background? Unfortunately, we cannot say very much about his origins, although at his earliest appearance in the historical record he is already a deity closely associated with the dead, their ruler and provider of their needs in the afterlife. On the other hand, the question can be understood to ask: who can be identified with Osiris, who can be said to be that god? To judge from the evidence that we have examined, an Egyptian of the Old Kingdom would have responded by saying that in the ritual moment anyone could be Osiris, but in the world beyond the ritual there was only the one god, with whom every deceased person hoped to enjoy the same beneficial relationship.

[341] For the concept of 'unreading', see Hays, *BIFAO* 109 (2009), pp. 195–220.

4

Democratizing the Afterlife? Aspects of the Osirian Afterlife during the Transition from the Late Old Kingdom to the Middle Kingdom

A widely held view in Egyptology is that the afterlife was 'democratized' in the period following the end of the Old Kingdom. The decline of royal power and centralized control in the First Intermediate Period led to a loss of respect for both the person of the king and the institution of kingship itself. This in turn triggered a change in ideas about the hereafter, whereby privileges formerly restricted to royalty—identification with Osiris and integration into the hierarchy of the gods in the next world—were now usurped by non-royal individuals who had gained access to copies of the spells and rituals that were believed to confer them. Whereas previously these individuals had hoped to experience, at best, an attenuated form of survival after death in comparison with the king's, one centred around their tombs in the necropolis, now they could look forward to enjoying the same benefits as their rulers.

In this chapter we will examine the evidence for the view outlined in the preceding paragraph. In recent years several critiques of it have appeared, arguing that no democratization of the afterlife took place at the time envisaged by its proponents. Instead, already in the Old Kingdom, Egyptian rulers and their subjects shared the same aspirations for the afterlife and hoped to fulfil these by the same means.[1] No one has come forward to refute the arguments of these critics. One might be excused, therefore, for thinking that the question has been settled in their favour and that there is no need to discuss it further here. I have chosen to do so for three reasons. First, as

[1] The first comprehensive presentation of the evidence for this alternative view was published in 2009. See M. Smith, 'Democratization of the Afterlife', in J. Dieleman and W. Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2009), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj. A subsequent study by H. Hays, 'The Death of the Democratisation of the Afterlife', in N. Strudwick and H. Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives: Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 115–30, goes over much of the same ground again. Ibid., p. 115, Hays provides a useful list of earlier publications in which objections to the democratization theory have been raised, to which one might add, e.g., E. Otto, *Osiris und Amun: Kult und heilige Stätten* (Munich, 1966), p. 24.

indicated above, the idea that ordinary people somehow managed to usurp the privileges enjoyed by their kings in the next world in the aftermath of the Old Kingdom remains a popular one in Egyptology, despite all the evidence marshalled to refute it. Second, there is still a considerable amount of confusion in the literature regarding the origin of the concept of democratization of the afterlife and the circumstances in which it arose. Third, with some notable exceptions, most critiques of the idea have focused on demonstrating that no such process took place, devoting little attention to the question of what actually did happen instead, particularly as regards the evolution of ideas about the relationship between Osiris and the deceased. I hope to redress this imbalance in the present chapter.

4.1. THE ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT OF THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE AFTERLIFE

In a study published in 2008, Harco Willems attempted to trace the origin and spread of this idea within the discipline of Egyptology.[2] According to him, it was a reaction to the social and political upheavals of the First World War and its aftermath. He specifically named the French Egyptologist Alexandre Moret as its earliest proponent, citing an article published by that scholar in 1922, entitled 'La accession de la plèbe égyptienne aux droits religieux et politiques sous le Moyen Empire'.[3] In an article published in 2009, however, I showed that Willems's explanation of the origin of the theory is incorrect.[4] The view that a process which led to the democratization of the afterlife took place at the end of the Old Kingdom had already been expressed by James Henry Breasted as early as 1912, well before the outbreak of the war, and therefore its origin owed nothing to the troubles that followed that conflict.[5] Breasted's precise words are worth quoting here. In one place, he spoke of 'the process that was democratizing the splendid royal hereafter', which he said led to the identification of every deceased person with Osiris.[6] Elsewhere he referred to the 'popularization of the old royal hereafter'.[7] In a third passage, he described how the Pyramid Text spells, which he said were concerned exclusively with the destiny of the king in the hereafter, were 'appropriated by the middle and the official class'.[8] Thus the theory of the

[2] H. Willems, *Les Textes des Sarcophages et la démocratie: Éléments d'une histoire culturelle du Moyen Empire égyptien* (Paris, 2008), pp. 131–40.

[3] *Recueil d'études égyptologiques dédiées à la mémoire de Jean-François Champollion à la occasion du centenaire de la Lettre à M. Dacier relative à l'alphabet des hiéroglyphes phonétiques lue à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres le 27 septembre 1822* (Paris, 1922), pp. 331–60.

[4] Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, p. 2.

[5] J.H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (New York, 1912).

[6] Ibid., p. 256. [7] Ibid., p. 257. [8] Ibid., p. 272.

democratization of the Egyptian afterlife is really a creation of the 'Golden Age' of the Edwardian era rather than the traumatic years of post-war upheaval.

The question was taken up subsequently by Harold Hays. He sought to identify the roots of the democratization theory, aiming to 'complement the general description by Harco Willems of the socio-political environment at its academic birth'.[9] Since Hays accepts my view that the theory did not originate in the socio-political environment that Willems thought it did, however, it is difficult to see in what sense his discussion can be regarded as a complement to the latter's description of that environment. In fact, Hays seeks to push the origin of the democratization theory even further back in time than I have done. He remarks that Breasted never actually uses the noun 'democratization' in the work quoted above. He credits Gardiner with being the first to use that term in the sense that concerns us here, quoting a 1915 publication of that scholar in which he refers to the '"democratization" of the old funerary literature and the like'.[10] In a sense, this is splitting hairs. As Hays admits, although Breasted does not use the noun 'democratization', he does employ the verb 'democratize' twice, and what else is 'the process that was democratizing the splendid royal hereafter',[11] if not democratization?

Gardiner refers the reader to an earlier publication for further information on the phenomenon of democratization: the introduction to Kurt Sethe's edition of the Pyramid Texts published in 1908.[12] According to Hays, Sethe's book is the ultimate origin of the theory.[13] But is this really the case? In my view, there is a subtle yet important difference between the phenomenon with which Sethe and Gardiner are concerned and that described by Breasted, which Hays has overlooked. Sethe speaks specifically about the appropriation by ordinary people of symbols and attributes previously reserved for the king: Pyramid Text spells, the title *Wsỉr*, 'Osiris', before their names, and the items of royal regalia depicted in the object friezes on private sarcophagi.[14] Likewise, *contra* Hays, Gardiner never refers to the democratization of the afterlife per se, only to the '"democratization" of the old funerary literature and the like', as a consequence of which, 'we find among the funeral furniture depicted on the sarcophagi and on the tomb-walls belonging to private individuals such unsuitable objects as the statues with kingly crowns, and such royal insignia as the vulture pectoral and the *uas*-sceptre'. In other words, both Sethe and Gardiner are primarily concerned with questions of display. For them democratization means that more people were able to display these texts and items in their tombs than had been the case previously. To be sure, it was precisely by means of the spells, 'the old funerary literature', that ordinary people hoped to enjoy a posthumous existence in what we have defined in the previous

[9] Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 116.
[10] See A. Gardiner in N. de Garis Davies and A. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt (No. 82)* (London 1915), p. 55 note 1.
[11] Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 256.
[12] K. Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1 (Leipzig, 1908), pp. vii–viii.
[13] Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 117.
[14] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. vii.

chapter as 'the world beyond the spell', but neither Sethe nor Gardiner seems very interested in this.

Breasted, by contrast, was, and thus envisaged a more profound change, a much more far-reaching social development. As he saw it, the very nature of the existence that ordinary people could aspire to in the afterlife was now altered, granting them access to the same benefits and privileges that their rulers enjoyed in the next world.[15] For this reason, I think that Hays is unjustified in attributing the concept of a democratized post-Old Kingdom afterlife to Sethe. On the basis of the evidence available at present, Breasted appears to have been the first to develop the idea, although we should not exclude the possibility that further investigation might one day allow us to trace its origins back even before him.

Willems has returned to this question more recently.[16] In reaction to my criticisms of his earlier views, he denies having said the things that attracted my critical comments. He now says, for instance, that he traced the origins of the democratization theory, not to Moret, but to Gardiner, specifically his edition of the text known as the Admonitions of Ipuwer which appeared in 1909. Nor did he argue, he now claims, that the years after the First World War gave rise to the theory. Rather, that was when the debate about it intensified.[17] But these assertions are not really borne out when checked against Willems's earlier work. What he actually said there was that he was inclined to situate the 'prelude' of the democratization theory at the time when Gardiner published his edition of Ipuwer.[18] Note how in his revised account 'prelude' has become 'origins'. Likewise, in his original discussion, Willems said that the democratization theory itself 'a pris son essor' with the appearance of Moret's article.[19] He made no reference to any contemporary debate about it, intense or otherwise, as claimed in his revised account. So I think that my original criticisms retain their force.

Precisely why Willems regards the appearance of Gardiner's edition of the Ipuwer text as a prelude to (or 'the origins of' if one prefers his revised nomenclature) the democratization theory is difficult to discern. In both his earlier and his more recent books he quotes the same passage from that edition as justification of his view. The passage reads in its entirety: 'The view that our Leiden papyrus contains allusions to the Hyksos has the better support from the historical standpoint, but philological and other considerations seem rather to point to the seventh to tenth dynasties as those which have provided the background of events. It is doubtless wise to leave the question open for the present.'[20] All Gardiner says here is that the available evidence is insufficient to determine whether Ipuwer is set in the First or the Second Intermediate Period, so it is

[15] See especially Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 256.

[16] See H. Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture: Religious Ideas and Ritual Practice in Middle Kingdom Elite Cemeteries* (Leiden and Boston, 2014), pp. 125–33.

[17] Ibid., p. 128 note 17.

[18] Willems, *Les Textes des Sarcophages et la démocratie*, p. 133.

[19] Ibid., p. 135.

[20] A. Gardiner, *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage from a Hieratic Papyrus in Leiden (Pap. Leiden 344 recto)* (Hildesheim, 1909), p. 18.

best to keep an open mind about this. There is nothing in the passage to suggest that the democratization theory might be looming on the horizon.

It is also difficult to understand why Willems is so reluctant to recognize the role of Breasted in the development of the theory. He claims that the fact that he was unaware of that scholar's 1912 publication and thus failed to cite it in his original discussion 'is quite immaterial'.[21] But as we have seen, the fact that Breasted was already writing about the democratization of the afterlife in 1912 invalidates Willems's ideas about the origins of that concept, proving that it did not arise in the socio-political environment that he thought it did and that its inventor was not the person he thought it was. This is hardly 'immaterial'. To recapitulate, on the available evidence, Breasted appears to be the originator of the theory of the democratization of the afterlife. At least, no more plausible candidates for this title have been put forward for consideration up until now.

4.2. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE AFTERLIFE

4.2.1. Empirical evidence and the assumption that influences its interpretation

The democratization theory rests upon two foundations. One is a body of empirical evidence, in particular, the distribution of extant texts for the afterlife in royal and non-royal tombs from the Old Kingdom and subsequent periods. The other is an assumption about the nature of contemporary ancient Egyptian society and the impact that this had on the development of beliefs and practices relating to the next world. As we will see, the latter has had a significant influence on the interpretation of the former.

According to empirical evidence, which forms the first foundation of the democratization theory, copies of spells like those constituting the Pyramid Texts are only found in royal tombs during the Old Kingdom.[22] In most instances, these were inscribed directly on the walls of the royal sepulchres, but they could also be written on other surfaces, as shown by the spells on the sarcophagus of Teti,[23] a libation altar found in the pyramid temple of Pepi I,[24] and a wooden casket belonging to Meretites II,

[21] Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 128 note 17.

[22] Cf. Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 119: 'Absence of mortuary texts in Old Kingdom non-royal tombs was the core fact in the construction of the democratisation theory.'

[23] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, pp. 1–3 (Spells 1–7).

[24] J. Leclant, 'Un support d'autel à libations du temple haut de Pépi Ier', in S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim* 2 (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 653–5 and 1118–19; A. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom: Philological Aspects of a Continuous Tradition in Egyptian Mortuary Literature* 1 (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2013), p. xxvii.

his daughter, the wife of a king called Neferkare.[25] By contrast, spells of this type are not securely attested in non-royal tombs until the First Intermediate Period. They become more common in the Middle Kingdom. Many of these later spells were inscribed on coffins, a circumstance that has led to them being designated as the Coffin Texts, but they occur on tomb walls, papyri, stelae, and other objects as well.[26]

In theory, there are various ways that one could interpret the evidence just described. In practice, however, one specific interpretation has held sway for decades: in the Old Kingdom, non-royal individuals had no spells analogous to those of the Pyramid Texts in their tombs because they were denied any participation in the sort of afterlife that such spells presupposed. When spells of this nature did start to be used by non-royalty in the First Intermediate Period, it was because they had usurped or otherwise appropriated them from their rulers, a development which could only have occurred at a time of weakened government control when the kings were powerless to prevent them from doing so.

Underlying this interpretation is the assumption that forms the second foundation of the democratization theory: because the ruler occupied a unique position in Egyptian society while he was alive, this must have continued after his death. Therefore, royal expectations for the afterlife must have been different to and grander than non-royal ones, just as royal tombs were larger and more elaborate than non-royal ones. A corollary to the view that royal expectations for the afterlife were fundamentally different and superior to non-royal ones is the belief held by many Egyptologists that the royal sphere enjoyed primacy in terms of creativity and invention. It was the source of all innovation as far as ideas about and preparations for the hereafter were concerned. Therefore any funerary custom, belief, or usage of any significance held in common by kings and their subjects must have originated there and filtered down to the non-royal sphere subsequently.

4.2.2. Assessing the validity of the assumption that underpins the democratization theory

Is this assumption a valid one? The evidence collected and analysed in section 2.10 indicates that, for the early dynastic period and the first half of the Old Kingdom, it is not. As seen there, we have no reason to think that the unique status of the king in this life was carried over into the next one as well, or that the royal afterlife was envisaged as being fundamentally different to that of ordinary people. Nor are there any good

[25] A. Labrousse, 'Recent Discoveries at the Necropolis of King Pepy I', in L. Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2012), pp. 305–6; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. xxvii and 149 note 386; Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 120, who wrongly describes her as a queen of Pepi I.

[26] M. Heerma van Voss, 'Sargtexte', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5 (Wiesbaden, 1984), p. 468. For further details, see the list of sources published in Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, pp. 238–315, under the heading 'Class'.

grounds for assuming a direct correlation between the size and cost of a tomb and the afterlife expectations of its occupant. No evidence was found to support the view that the royal sphere was the source of all innovation as far as ideas about and preparations for the afterlife were concerned. In fact, relatively few innovations in this realm appear in the royal sphere first during this period. Most make their initial appearance in the non-royal sphere, and several appear in both spheres more or less simultaneously. It appears that the boundaries between royal and non-royal spheres were less rigidly drawn than commonly supposed, and that there was a regular exchange of ideas between them, with innovation and borrowing on both sides.

The evidence gathered in section 3.9.3 indicates that the same was true in the second half of the Old Kingdom. A comparison of the Pyramid Texts with contemporary non-royal sources like the offering formulas in private tombs of the fifth and sixth dynasties showed that both reflect the same basic conception of the afterlife and probably drew upon a common stock of ideas. In particular, the relationship between Osiris and the dead envisaged in the Pyramid Texts appears to have been fundamentally the same as that envisaged in contemporary private tomb inscriptions. Nor is there any firm evidence to support the view that in this period the royal sphere was the source of every innovation in the funerary realm. As we saw in section 2.10.2, the fact that something is attested in that sphere first cannot be used as proof that it originated there.

If the assumption that royal aspirations for the afterlife differed significantly from non-royal ones in the Old Kingdom is demonstrably invalid, and its corollary that new ideas pertaining to the next world invariably originated in the royal sphere can be shown to be untrue, then one of the two foundations supporting the theory of the democratization of the afterlife is removed. Although from one point of view this might seem like a retrograde step, since it undermines a long-held point of view, from another perspective it is actually a positive development, since it permits us to devote our undivided attention to the other foundation of the theory and re-examine it in a more objective way, without any preconceptions. If ordinary Egyptians had the same aspirations for the afterlife as their rulers in the Old Kingdom, then why are the spells that would ensure fulfilment of these aspirations absent from their tombs? We will investigate this question in the following sections.

4.3. PYRAMID TEXTS AND RELATED SPELLS IN PRIVATE TOMBS OF THE OLD KINGDOM?

4.3.1. Spells for the afterlife from private tombs that may date to the Old Kingdom

A useful way of starting our investigation will be to scrutinize the empirical evidence more closely. Is it really the case that copies of spells like those constituting the Pyramid Texts occur exclusively in royal tombs during the Old Kingdom? Are there no

examples at all from non-royal burial monuments of that time? In fact, a number of private tombs and objects emanating from such tombs which have been dated to the Old Kingdom do actually preserve spells of this nature. Remains of phrases similar to those found in some later Coffin Text spells have been preserved on fragments of a shroud belonging to a provincial governor named Medunefer from Balat in the Dakhla Oasis. It has been argued that these were originally inscribed on his coffin, which is now lost, and were imprinted on the shroud as a result of prolonged direct contact between its surface and that of the inner wall of the coffin in damp conditions.[27] The texts on Medunefer's shroud are generally dated to the end of the sixth dynasty, although Fischer has argued on orthographic grounds that they cannot be earlier than the eighth.[28]

The coffin of a man called Anu who was buried at South Saqqara is inscribed with Pyramid Text spells. Dates assigned to this object range from the sixth dynasty to the ninth dynasty.[29] Pyramid Text spells have also been discovered in the tomb of Menankhpepi/Meni at Dendera, which some date as early as the reign of Pepi I.[30] Another group of spells is inscribed on the walls of the tomb of Pepi-ima at Mendes.[31] This has been dated to the end of the sixth dynasty, more specifically, the reign of Pepi II, by its excavators, although some place it later, in the seventh or eighth dynasties. The texts inscribed in Pepi-ima's tomb are similar to, but not identical with, those found in the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts.

A wooden bedstead found inside the coffin of Niankhpepi at Saqqara is inscribed with apotropaic spells resembling some of those found in the Coffin Texts.[32] This has

[27] M. Valloggia, *Le mastaba de Medou-Nefer* (Cairo, 1986), pp. 74–8 and plates 62–3; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 101–2 note 273, 109 note 292, and 168–9 note 469; A. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom: Philological Aspects of a Continuous Tradition in Egyptian Mortuary Literature* 2 (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2013), pp. 687 note 1975 and 768 note 2168.

[28] H. Fischer, 'Quelques particuliers à Saqqâra', in C. Berger and B. Mathieu (eds), *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer* (Montpellier, 1997), p. 184 note 3; G. Lapp, 'Totentexte der Privatleute vom Ende des Alten Reiches bis zur 1. Zwischenzeit unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Sargkammern und Särgen', *SAK* 43 (2014), p. 219.

[29] See B. Russo, 'Funerary Spells at Saqqara South: Some Considerations about the Inscriptions of Anu's Coffin (Sq20X) and their Date', *ZÄS* 139 (2012), pp. 80–92; B. Mathieu, 'Le "Livre de Nout" du chancelier Anou: "Nouvelles" versions de Textes des Pyramides', in I. Régen and F. Servajean (eds), *Verba manent: Recueil d'études dédiées à Dimitri Meeks* 2 (Montpellier, 2009), pp. 295–306, especially pp. 302–3; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 33 and 227–8 note 650; Lapp, *SAK* 43 (2014), p. 220.

[30] W.M.F. Petrie, *Dendereh 1898* (London, 1900), pp. 44–5 and plate 3; N. Kanawati, 'Decoration of Burial Chambers, Sarcophagi and Coffins in the Old Kingdom', in K. Daoud, S. Bedier, and S. Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2 (Cairo, 2005), p. 68; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, pp. 547–9 and 768 note 2168; Lapp, *SAK* 43 (2014), p. 212 note 24.

[31] For description and extensive bibliography, see Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 165–72.

[32] J. Osing, 'Sprüche gegen die *jbḥtj*-Schlange', *MDAIK* 43 (1987), pp. 205–10; S. Grunert, 'Die Geburtsumstände der *Jbhaty*-Schlange: Eine Komposition von Sprüchen auf der Totenbahre zur Ehrfurcht vor dem Leichnam', *SAK* 38 (2009), pp. 101–12; E. Brovarski, 'False Doors & History: The Sixth Dynasty', in M. Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology* (Prague, 2006), p. 106; Lapp, *SAK* 43 (2014), pp. 220 and 222; A. Morales, 'From Voice to Wall: Verschriftung and Verschriftlichung in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts', in M. Hilgert (ed.), *Understanding Material Text Cultures: A Multidisciplinary View* (Berlin, 2016), p. 94.

been dated to the eighth dynasty. The tomb chapel of Kasenu, now in Hildesheim, probably originates from Giza or Saqqara. It preserves an excerpt from Pyramid Text Spell 664 and has been dated to the late Old Kingdom or First Intermediate Period.[33] The walls of the tomb of Khesu the elder at Kom el-Hisn are inscribed with a range of Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts.[34] Estimates of its date range from the late Old Kingdom to the First Intermediate Period as well. In addition there are smaller objects bearing spells of this type like P. Gardiner II–IV (Coffin Texts),[35] an inscribed block from the tomb of Reherishefnakht at South Saqqara, now in the store of the MafS (Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts),[36] and two fragments from the nearby tombs of Ankhnenmerire and Pepiankhes, Berlin ÄM 7730 and 7495 (both inscribed with Pyramid Texts).[37] Some would assign these to the sixth dynasty, although others think that they are later.[38]

In all these cases, we can be certain of the nature of the texts involved. Some can actually be identified as Pyramid Text spells or Coffin Text spells. Others bear a close resemblance to spells in those corpora, even if one cannot find precise parallels for them there. The problem with this evidence is one that we have already encountered in earlier chapters, uncertainty over dating. How much of it actually dates to the Old Kingdom? If even a part of it does, then this is sufficient to show that at least some non-royal individuals were inscribing spells for the afterlife in their tombs at that time, and therefore expected to enjoy the benefits that they were supposed to confer. But as long as disagreement persists about the dating of these sources, we cannot state that this was the case with total confidence.

[33] H. Kayser, *Die ägyptischen Altertümer im Roemer-Pelizaeus-Museum in Hildesheim* (Hildesheim, 1973), p. 37; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, pp. 619–20.

[34] For bibliography, see Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 149–58.

[35] B. Mathieu, 'La distinction entre Textes des Pyramides et Textes des Sarcophages est-elle légitime?', in S. Bickel and B. Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre: Textes des Pyramides & Textes des Sarcophages* (Cairo, 2004), p. 254 note 10; A. Forgeau, *Horus-fils-de-Isis: La jeunesse d'un dieu* (Cairo, 2010), pp. 57–8 and 89–90; L. Gestermann, 'Neues zu Pap. Gardiner II (BM EA 10676)', in Z. Hawass and L. Pinch Brock (eds), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century* 1 (Cairo and New York, 2003), pp. 202–8; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 101 note 273 and 168 note 469; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, p. 649; Lapp, *SAK* 43 (2014), pp. 219–20.

[36] A. Labrousse and J. Leclant, 'Découvertes récentes de la mission archéologique Française à Saqqara (Campagnes 2001–2005)', *CRAIBL* 150 (2006), p. 118; Labrousse in Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'*, pp. 306–8; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 33 and 229–30.

[37] Königliche Museen zu Berlin (ed.), *Aegyptische Inschriften aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin* 1 (Berlin, 1913), pp. 3 and 266; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 230–1.

[38] See Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, p. 2, and references cited there, to which add Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, pp. 133–4 note 32 (on the date of the tomb of Reherishefnakht).

4.3.2. Texts from private tombs securely dated to the Old Kingdom that may be spells for the afterlife

We encounter a problem of a different sort when trying to evaluate texts like the so-called *Herdsman's Song* and *Song of the Palanquin* found in private tombs of the fifth and sixth dynasties. With these two obscure compositions, it is not the date that is uncertain, but rather the nature and function of the texts themselves. The former refers to an obscure deity called Bet who is said to be in the water among the fish.[39] The latter may be a prayer addressed to a god asking him to protect and aggrandize the deceased.[40] Are they really intended to benefit the deceased in the afterlife as some think? We face the same problem in trying to interpret the texts associated with scenes of uprooting or rattling papyrus stems, which are found in Old Kingdom tombs from the fourth dynasty onward. As we saw in section 2.3.3.2, some associate these with the deceased's ascent to the sky, but the idea remains highly speculative.

4.3.3. Summary of evidence for spells in private tombs of the Old Kingdom

The results of our scrutiny of the empirical evidence provided by texts actually preserved in private tombs are inconclusive. A number of tombs or objects emanating from them that are inscribed with Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, or combinations of the two have been dated to the Old Kingdom, but in no instance is such an early dating uncontested. Thus we have no certain example of copies of such spells being inscribed or deposited in private tombs during that period. Even if some of the earlier dates proposed for these monuments are correct, moreover, we would still have little evidence for the practice much before the reign of Pepi II. By contrast, the dating of extant copies of compositions like the *Herdsman's Song* and *Song of the Palanquin* to the Old Kingdom is secure, but the status of these as texts for the afterlife is uncertain. Fortunately, however, this is not the only evidence at our disposal in our attempt to determine whether or not non-royal individuals employed the same spells to ensure their posthumous existence as their rulers did during the Old Kingdom.

[39] See G. Meyer, 'Das Hirtenlied in den Privatgräbern des Alten Reiches', *SAK* 17 (1990), pp. 235–84; H. Altenmüller, 'Kälberhirte und Schafhirte: Bemerkungen zur Rückkehr des Grabherrn', *SAK* 16 (1989), pp. 1–19.

[40] H. Altenmüller, 'Das "Sänftenlied" des Alten Reiches', *BSEG* 9–10 (1984–5), pp. 15–30.

4.4. NON-ROYAL SPELLS IN ROYAL PYRAMIDS OF THE OLD KINGDOM

It has long been known that the corpus of the Pyramid Texts includes spells that were not composed specifically for the benefit of kings.[41] We have already encountered a number of examples in the previous chapter. In the version of Spell 215 inscribed in the pyramid of Unis, for instance, an original *mn*, 'so and so', which should have been replaced by that king's name, was inadvertently left unaltered, indicating that the *Vorlage* of that spell was a copy intended for an anonymous non-royal person.[42] The colophon of Spell 456, preserved in the pyramids of Teti, Pepi I, Merenre, and Pepi II, states 'Whoever really knows it, this utterance of Re, and recites them, these magical utterances of Harakhti, he will be as one known by Re, he will be as a companion of Harakhti.'[43] This makes it clear that the benefits of the spell are not reserved for members of a particular social group, but are accessible to anyone who knows and recites the utterance. Similarly, the end of Spell 561B, only extant in a damaged version in the pyramid of Pepi I, asserts 'As for the one who will truly [worship] Osiris while performing/reciting this magic for him, he will live for ever.'[44] This is actually the earliest explicit statement we have of the doctrine that those who devote themselves to Osiris will triumph over death as he did, and it is surely significant that the benefit the spell promises is not restricted to kings.

Some other Pyramid Text spells contain statements which show that they were composed with non-royal individuals in mind. These include Spell 467, which says that the beneficiary will not revile the king,[45] Spell 486, which says that he cannot be seized because of the king,[46] and Spell 571, which says that he will not die because of the king.[47] In all three cases, the beneficiary of the spell is clearly envisaged as someone separate from the ruler. The relationship postulated between them in these spells is by no means a harmonious one, and is in some instances fraught with danger.

Examples like these provide clear proof that in the Old Kingdom there was a common stock of spells for the afterlife from which both kings and their subjects could draw. The former did not hesitate to make use of utterances composed for the latter in their tombs. There is, in fact, relatively little in the Pyramid Texts that appears to be explicitly royal in nature,[48] so it may well be that the corpus of spells inscribed

[41] See L. Kákosy, 'The Pyramid Texts and Society in the Old Kingdom', *Studia Aegyptiaca* 7 (1981), pp. 27–40, especially pp. 30 and 34; Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, p. 7.

[42] See section 3.2.3; H. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1 (Leiden and Boston, 2012), p. 131.

[43] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, pp. 477–8, §855a–d.

[44] I. Pierre-Croisiau, *Les textes de la pyramide de Pépy 1er*, volume 2 (Cairo, 2001), plate 22, line 26.

[45] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 498, §892a.

[46] K. Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2 (Leipzig, 1910), p. 81, §1041b.

[47] Ibid., p. 303, §1468c.

[48] See, however, the version of Spell 23 in the pyramid of Unis, discussed in section 3.2.3, where *nswt*, 'king', was carved originally but then replaced by the name of the pyramid's owner. While this shows that a copy of the spell designed for an anonymous king must have existed before the text of Unis was inscribed, it need not mean that the spell itself was of royal origin.

in Old Kingdom pyramids contains a considerable number of other utterances of non-royal, or perhaps neutral, origin which have yet to be identified as such. With this point established, we can return once again to texts inscribed in private tombs. Although we have been unable to identify any private tombs inscribed with spells resembling those in the Pyramid Texts whose dating to the Old Kingdom is uncontroversial, there are nevertheless tombs whose attribution to this period is beyond question inscribed with texts of a rather different sort which are no less valuable from the point of view of our investigation.

4.5. INDIRECT EVIDENCE FOR KNOWLEDGE OF SPELLS FROM PRIVATE TOMBS OF THE OLD KINGDOM

4.5.1. Claims to be an *akh* and know or have access to glorification spells in addresses to the living

As we saw in sections 2.2.1 and 2.8.1, an important feature of both royal and non-royal tombs from a very early date was a chapel or equivalent space where visitors could come and perform the cult of offerings for the tomb owner. This constituted the major venue for interaction between the living and the dead. From the fifth dynasty onward, texts addressed to visitors were inscribed on the walls of the non-royal chapel, thus permitting the tomb owner to speak to them directly, encouraging them to perform the prescribed acts of piety on his behalf, assuring them that he was a worthy beneficiary of their solicitude, and warning them to refrain from any sort of behaviour that might harm the tomb or its occupant.

Addresses of this sort foreground the tomb owner's rhetorical facility, his ability to speak persuasively and justify his actions and desires to others.[49] A central feature of them is the assertion that the tomb owner is an *akh*, a transfigured or glorified spirit, a device by means of which he seeks to compel those who visit his burial place to behave appropriately in his presence and perform the requisite services for him. This is significant for our investigation because the status of *akh* could only be attained by ritual means, specifically through the recitation of spells called *sakhu*, 'glorifications' (literally '*akh*-makers').[50]

The close connection between the status of *akh* and the ritual recitations through which it was acquired is emphasized in a number of addresses to visitors in private tombs of the fifth and sixth dynasties.[51] Thus, in his tomb at Giza, the scribe Ankhudja

[49] L. Coulon, 'Rhétorique et stratégies du discours dans les formules funéraires: Les innovations des Textes des Sarcophages', in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, pp. 119–42.

[50] See sections 2.1.2 and 2.6.1.

[51] For all those cited in the paragraphs that follow, see Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, pp. 3 and 7. As I have pointed out in note 1, Hays repeats many of these in his contribution to Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 124–5.

asserts 'I am an excellent *akh* who knows his utterances.'[52] Other tomb owners claim 'I know everything through which one becomes an *akh* in the necropolis.'[53] In several texts, the deceased claims to be an excellent *akh* who knows or is equipped with magic, the source of which must have been glorification spells.[54] As we have already seen, the word *ḥkꜣ*, 'magic', is used to describe utterances in the Pyramid Text corpus.[55]

The emphasis in all of these cases is upon actually knowing the spells, so clearly acquiring the requisite knowledge was one means by which the deceased could gain access to them and the benefits that they were thought to confer.[56] But knowledge was not absolutely essential to achieve this aim. Other inscriptions refrain from attributing personal knowledge to the tomb owner, but record instead that the rituals for transforming a person into an *akh* have been performed for him or express the hope that they will be.[57] So provided that someone else was available to carry out the necessary ritual acts and recite the proper spells for his benefit, an individual did not need to know these himself.

4.5.2. Sources of glorification spells for private tomb owners

How did those tomb owners who boasted of having glorification spells at their disposal obtain access to them? A few texts characterise the spells in question as *sšṯꜣ* (var. *šṯꜣ*), often translated as 'secret', the sense of this being that they were only accessible or revealed to a small group of initiates.[58] Some individuals actually speak of being inducted or initiated into these secrets,[59] or assert that no part thereof has been hidden or concealed from them.[60] But *sšṯꜣ* can also mean 'incomprehensible', that is to say,

[52] H. Junker, *Gîza* 8 (Vienna, 1947), pp. 134–5 and Abb. 62.

[53] E. Edel, 'Untersuchungen zur Phraseologie der ägyptischen Inschriften des Alten Reiches', *MDAIK* 13 (1944), pp. 22–6.

[54] Edel, *MDAIK* 13 (1944), pp. 22–5; N. Kloth, *Die (auto-) biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches: Untersuchungen zur Phraseologie und Entwicklung* (Hamburg, 2002), pp. 117–18.

[55] See section 3.9.1.

[56] Cf. Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 125–6.

[57] Edel, *MDAIK* 13 (1944), pp. 26–9; E. Edel, 'Inschriften des Alten Reiches II: Die Biographie des Kagemni', *MIO* 1 (1953), p. 328; G. Goyon, 'Le tombeau d'Ankhou à Saqqara', *Kêmi* 15 (1959), p. 17 and plate 3.

[58] Edel, *MIO* 1 (1953), p. 213 and plate 2; E. Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften des Alten Reiches* (Opladen, 1981), pp. 10 and 20, Abb. 1 and 4; T.G.H. James, *The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi* (London, 1953), pp. 36–7 and plate 5; N. Kanawati and M. Abder-Razuq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara 5: The Tomb of Hesi* (Warminster, 1999), p. 22 and plate 52; A. Lloyd, J. Spencer, and A. El-Khouli, *Saqqara Tombs II: The Mastabas of Meru, Semdenti, Khui and Others* (London, 1990), p. 37 and plate 22; K. Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reiches* (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 143 and 202; H. Wild, 'L'adresse aux visiteurs du tombeau de Ti', *BIFAO* 58 (1959), p. 104.

[59] James, *The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi*, pp. 36–7 and plate 5; K. Myśliwiec, K. Kuraszkiewicz, and D. Czerwik, *The Tomb of Merefnebef* (Warsaw, 2004), p. 73 and plate 14; Wild, *BIFAO* 58 (1959), p. 104.

[60] James, *The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi*, pp. 36–7 and plate 5; Myśliwiec, Kuraszkiewicz, and Czerwik, *The Tomb of Merefnebef*, pp. 76–7 and plate 15.

beyond human comprehension or apprehension, which would be an apt description of utterances whose efficacy was deemed to be reliant upon the power of the spoken word in a ritual context. Perhaps the term should be understood in both senses when used with reference to glorification spells.

A few inscriptions shed further light upon the source of the ritual power that the tomb owner claims to have at his disposal. A text in the tomb of the priest and metalworker Ankhu at Saqqara, probably dating to the early sixth dynasty, implies that someone who was already an *akh* could intervene to obtain that status for others.[61] In his mastaba at Giza, the fifth dynasty official Nimaatre states 'The king ordered all the rites of glorification to be carried out for me.'[62] Similarly, Merefnebef, a sixth dynasty vizier buried at Saqqara, attributes his status in the afterlife to the fact that 'His majesty desired more than anything that I should be glorified in the sight of the god.'[63]

Statements like these last two might be taken as an indication that it was the king who granted the privilege of being glorified, of becoming an *akh*.[64] However, the vast majority of those who claim to have enjoyed the benefits of glorification rites or assert that they know the spells employed in them make no reference to the ruler's involvement. Had there been any such involvement, this would hardly have gone unmentioned. Thus, it is more likely that in the cases just noted, the king actually paid for the performance of the rites as a mark of special favour, and this is what the tomb owner is recording. One can compare other Old Kingdom inscriptions in which the occupant of a tomb boasts that the ruler provided him with a false door, sarcophagus, or even an entire sepulchre, such gifts being cited as evidence of how highly he was esteemed by the monarch whom he served.[65] This is not to say that the king had no influence whatsoever over who was glorified and who was not. A decree of the ephemeral late Old Kingdom ruler Demedjibtawi asserts that he has the power to prohibit malefactors from joining the *akhs* in the necropolis.[66] The above-mentioned Ankhu states that he knows 'the royal decree made for an *akh*',[67] which may be a reference to an ordinance of similar nature.

A number of tomb owners explicitly refer to glorification spells as 'writings of the house of the god's book',[68] implying that there was a library or archive where copies of these were kept. This repository can be further described as 'the house of the god's book of the *senut*-shrine',[69] which suggests that it was attached or connected to a temple. It is of interest that all of these references come from tombs at Saqqara, adjacent to the

[61] Goyon, *Kêmi* 15 (1959), p. 15 and plate 1.
[62] Edel, *MDAIK* 13 (1944), p. 75.
[63] Myśliwiec, Kuraszkiewicz, and Czerwik, *The Tomb of Merefnebef*, pp. 81–2 and plate 16.
[64] As assumed in Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 213.
[65] See e.g. Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reiches*, pp. 18–21, 38–9, and 99–100.
[66] Ibid., p. 305; H. Goedicke, *Königliche Dokumente aus dem Alten Reich* (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 214 and 217 with Abb. 28.
[67] Goyon, *Kêmi* 15 (1959), p. 17 and plate 3.
[68] James, *The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi*, p. 36 and plate 5; Kanawati and Abder-Razuq, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara 5*, p. 22 and plate 52.
[69] James, *The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi*, p. 36 and plate 5.

capital Memphis. In his tomb at Deir el-Gabrawi, the nomarch and overseer of Upper Egypt Ibi asserts that he is an excellent and well-equipped *akh* who knows 'all the secret magic of the residence, every secret thing through which one is glorified in the necropolis',[70] further evidence of the existence of an archive containing glorification spells in the capital.

This evidence gathered from addresses to visitors inscribed in private tombs of the fifth and sixth dynasties shows conclusively that non-royal individuals had access to glorification spells during this period and expected to benefit from their recitation. It is further confirmed by other Old Kingdom evidence. Wishes in offering formulas in private tombs express the desire that the tomb owner might have glorification spells recited for his benefit.[71] There are also representations of funerals in private tombs that depict priests in the act of reciting glorification spells for the deceased.[72] A good example occurs in the sixth dynasty tomb of Kagemni at Saqqara, where a lector priest is shown reading from a papyrus roll for his benefit. The labels in front of and behind this figure inform us that he is 'reciting numerous glorifications'.[73] Similar representations with labels alluding to the recitation of glorifications for the benefit of the deceased occur in other Old Kingdom tombs as well.[74] As we have seen, the earliest of these dates to the beginning of the fourth dynasty.[75]

4.5.3. Non-royal access to spells in the Pyramid Texts corpus

The best known and only substantial collection of Old Kingdom glorification spells extant today is preserved in the corpus of Pyramid Texts.[76] This raises an obvious question. Were the Pyramid Text spells available to non-royal individuals? In other words, were the glorification spells recited for them the same as those recited for deceased kings? The evidence at our disposal indicates that they were. In an inscription in the tomb of a sixth dynasty official named Sabni at Qubbet el-Hawa near Aswan he asserts 'I am an excellent *akh* who knows his spell. I know the spell for ascending to the

[70] Edel, *MDAIK* 13 (1944), p. 23; Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reiches*, p. 143.

[71] W. Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel* (Glückstadt, 1968), pp. 29 and 34.

[72] See Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, p. 3.

[73] J. Assmann, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien* 1 (Heidelberg, 2002), pp. 13–15. Cf. A. Badawy, 'The Spiritualization of Kagemni', *ZÄS* 108 (1981), pp. 85–93.

[74] W.K. Simpson, *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu* (Boston, 1976), figures 22 and 34; J. Wilson, 'Funeral Services of the Egyptian Old Kingdom', *JNES* 3 (1944), pp. 208 and 213–17; Lapp, *SAK* 43 (2014), pp. 209–11.

[75] See sections 2.1.2 and 2.6.1.

[76] For Pyramid Text glorification spells, see J. Assmann, 'Egyptian Mortuary Liturgies', in S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim* 1 (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 3 and 34–8; J. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Atlanta, 2005), p. 7; Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 126–8; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 255 and 269–72; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, p. 5.

great god, the lord of the sky.'[77] Ascent to the great god, that is to say, the solar deity, is a prominent motif in a number of Pyramid Text spells,[78] and Sabni may actually be claiming knowledge of one of these.[79] Likewise, in the aforementioned tomb of Merefnebef at Saqqara, the occupant says he knows 'all the rituals by which an *akh* who has gone to the necropolis as a revered one of the great god in the sight of the king is glorified' and 'all the rituals by which he (scil. the *akh*) ascends to the great god'.[80] A very similar claim is made in inscriptions from the tombs of Ti and Mereruka, also at Saqqara. These assert the tomb owners' knowledge of 'all the rites by which an *akh* who has gone to the necropolis is glorified' and 'all the rites by which he ascends to the great god'.[81]

Further corroboration of this view is provided by an offering formula from the tomb of the sixth dynasty official Iteti at Saqqara.[82] The field of offerings, a region of the night sky situated to the north of the ecliptic, figures prominently in the Pyramid Texts as a destination that the deceased king is supposed to reach.[83] Iteti's formula demonstrates that contemporary non-royalty could aspire to reach the same destination, since it envisages that its beneficiary will 'travel on the beautiful roads to the field of offerings', and presumably he was supposed to gain admittance to this celestial region with the aid of the same sort of spells that allowed royalty to enter it. The unambiguous evidence of this last example refutes the view expressed by some that 'ascending to the great god' in private tomb inscriptions of the Old Kingdom is simply a euphemism for reaching the necropolis.[84] In any case, the texts cited in the preceding paragraph make it clear that going to the necropolis and ascending to the great god are two totally different things.

We know that kings made use of spells originally composed for ordinary people in their burial places, which suggests that there was no sharp distinction between royal and non-royal utterances.[85] Moreover, we saw in section 3.9.3 the striking congruence of ideas between the wishes expressed in offering formulas in private tombs of the Old Kingdom and the spells of the Pyramid Text corpus. Not only are the same hopes and aspirations found in private offering formulas reflected in those utterances as well, they cluster together in the same groups in the Pyramid Texts as they do in the private offering formulas, indicating that both drew upon a common source. If the same benefits and privileges in the afterlife were sought for both royal and non-royal beneficiaries, why should two totally different collections of spells be necessary to confer these upon them?

[77] L. Habachi, *Sixteen Studies on Lower Nubia* (Cairo, 1981), pp. 20–1.
[78] See section 3.9.3.
[79] Mathieu in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, pp. 257–8 and 262.
[80] Myśliwiec, Kuraszkiewicz, and Czerwik, *The Tomb of Merefnebef*, pp. 73–4 and plate 14.
[81] Wild, *BIFAO* 58 (1959), p. 104.
[82] M. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas* 1 (London, 1905), plate 18.
[83] H. Hays, 'Transformation of Context: The Field of Rushes in Old and Middle Kingdom Mortuary Literature', in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, p. 177.
[84] See e.g. Lapp, *SAK* 43 (2014), pp. 215–18. [85] See section 4.4.

In the case of glorification spells, then, there is good reason to think that non-royal individuals had access to the same corpus of material as their rulers. The situation was probably very much the same as with the offering ritual, which we have already discussed in sections 2.2.1, 3.2.2, and 3.9.2. The only difference between the royal and private versions of this ceremony was that the former incorporated the presentation of various objects pertaining to the Rite of Opening the Mouth, certain items of the king's regalia, and a short concluding meal.[86] Initially these were omitted in the non-royal version, although by the end of the sixth dynasty the objects in the first group had been added to it as well.[87] In much the same way, the glorification rites conducted for the king could have been given a distinctively royal stamp, should this have been desired, by the addition of a few especially composed spells and other small adjustments, without requiring the creation of a completely separate corpus.

How non-royal individuals would have made their selection from the range of spells available to them is a matter for speculation. There is likely to have been a considerable amount of variation, just as there was in the case of spells inscribed inside royal pyramids. The Pyramid Texts of Unis, for instance, comprise only around 230 spells, whereas those of Pepi I number approximately 740.[88] Nor would their choice have been limited to those utterances that happen to be preserved in pyramids belonging to kings today. There must have been a considerable body of additional material from which they could choose. Morales has pointed out that each of the three pyramids that were inscribed for wives of Pepi II contains spells that are not found in any king's pyramid: 2.4 per cent of those in the pyramid of Neith, 12.2 per cent of those in that of Iput II, and 20.4 per cent of those in the pyramid of Wedjebteni.[89] Among sources to which non-royalty had access in later periods, a number of Coffin Text spells have clear antecedents in the Pyramid Texts and thus will have formed part of the corpus of material available in the Old Kingdom, but we should also consider the possibility that some Coffin Text spells for which no earlier counterparts are known may already have been in existence and thus potentially usable at this time as well.

The earliest texts in which tomb owners claim to have knowledge of glorification spells like those in the Pyramid Texts date to the fifth dynasty. Such spells do not begin to appear in the pyramids of queens until well into the sixth dynasty. Thus there can be no question of a gradual widening of access to them via a 'trickle down' effect, whereby

[86] H. Altenmüller, *Die Texte zum Begräbnisritual in den Pyramiden des Alten Reiches* (Wiesbaden, 1972), pp. 79–80; W. Barta, *Die altägyptische Opferliste von der Frühzeit bis zur griechisch-römischen Epoche* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 60–1.

[87] Barta, *Die altägyptische Opferliste von der Frühzeit bis zur griechisch-römischen Epoche*, pp. 78 and 182; E. Brovarski, 'The Late Old Kingdom at South Saqqara', in L. Pantalacci and C. Berger-El-Naggar (eds), *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep: Travaux archéologiques en cours sur la fin de la VIe dynastie et la première période intermédiaire* (Lyon, 2005), p. 53; G. Lapp, *Typologie der Särge und Sargkammern von der 6. bis 13. Dynastie* (Heidelberg, 1993), p. 22.

[88] See Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, p. 31 note 77.

[89] A. Morales, 'Pyramid Texts as Ritual Icons: Mechanisms of Monumentalization and Adaptation in the Chambers of the Old Kingdom Queens', in J. Quack and D. Luft (eds), *Schrift und Material: Praktische Verwendung religiöser Text- und Bildträger als Artefakte im Alten Ägypten* (Tübingen, forthcoming).

first only kings could employ the utterances, then queens could as well, and finally other people.[90] This does raise the question, however, of how far down the social scale access to glorification spells extended.

4.5.4. How many had access to spells like those in the Pyramid Texts corpus?

Non-royal individuals in the Old Kingdom claiming to have access to glorification spells held various offices. Some were clearly of higher rank and status than others. This leads us to ask who was entitled to make use of the spells and who was not.[91] Many of those who did employ them held the rank of lector priest, among other titles, which would have ensured them access to the texts required.[92] Some tomb inscriptions even make explicit reference to glorification spells recited 'in accordance with the secret writing of the lector priest's art',[93] which might suggest that those priests held a sort of monopoly over them, but it was by no means obligatory for one to serve in this capacity in order to enjoy the benefits that the spells were thought to confer. If archives containing these existed in only a few places, then perhaps access to them was determined more by where a person lived and worked than by what he actually did. The fact that the sixth dynasty (or slightly later) provincial governor Medunefer in far-off Balat in the Dakhla Oasis had spells for the afterlife buried with him, for instance,[94] is probably due to the close relations that existed between that place and the capital Memphis, which is known to have possessed an archive where copies of such utterances were stored.[95]

Willems believes that only a small minority of non-royal individuals had access to glorification spells in the Old Kingdom. If these had been widely available, he argues, tomb owners would not have expressed their pride in knowing them in texts inscribed in the public areas of their burial places. Therefore access to such spells must have been restricted to a few.[96] Willems refers here to assertions that the tomb owner is an *akh* or has knowledge of spells that transform people into *akhs*, like those frequently found in Old Kingdom addresses to the living. But such declarations were not expressions of pride. Rather their purpose was a practical one: to compel visitors to the tomb to behave appropriately in the owner's presence and perform the requisite services

[90] See e.g. J. Allen, 'The Pyramid Texts of Queens *Jpwt* and *Wḏbt-n.(j)*', *JARCE* 23 (1986), p. 1.
[91] Cf. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 169–71.
[92] Edel, *MDAIK* 13 (1944), p. 21.
[93] Lloyd, Spencer, and El-Khouli, *Saqqara Tombs II*, p. 37 and plate 22; Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reiches*, pp. 186–7, 190, and 202.
[94] See section 4.3.1.
[95] See L. Pantalacci, 'De Memphis à Balat: Les liens entre la résidence et les gouverneurs de l'oasis à la VIe dynastie', in Berger and Mathieu (eds), *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer*, pp. 341–9.
[96] Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 213.

for him.[97] Assertion of one's status as an *akh* was a crucial part of the strategy for persuading them to do what was desired. Whether possession of that status made the tomb owner part of a larger or a smaller group was irrelevant.

Several of the texts that we have cited make specific reference to written copies of glorification spells.[98] But were these only deemed to be effective when read out from such manuscripts? As we saw in section 3.2.3, a number of scholars maintain that there must have been a period during which the Pyramid Texts were transmitted orally before they were first set down in writing. If so, why should spells of this nature have ceased to be transmitted in oral form after this had happened? One could envisage a situation in which they circulated in both written and oral form concurrently.[99]

Who was entitled to recite the spells? Willems assumes that only professional priests could do so, although without citing any evidence to support such an assumption.[100] According to Hays, only those who had been authorized by the king could utter them. The spells would have no efficacy unless recited by someone with the royal imprimatur.[101] Perhaps (as suggested by Hays's use of the word 'imprimatur') this view has been unduly influenced by the belief in some Christian churches that only those properly ordained as priests can speak efficaciously in ritual contexts. In ancient Egypt, on the contrary, all the evidence indicates that anyone who could master the words of a spell, whether in written or oral form, would be in a position to use it.[102] If this was so, then perhaps the number of non-royal recitants and beneficiaries of glorification spells during the Old Kingdom was much larger than is normally assumed, embracing a range of different social levels, and not just high-ranking officials and priests who possessed the resources to build elaborate tombs in which they could publicly proclaim the fact that they had such utterances at their disposal.

4.6. ACCESS VS. DISPLAY

The evidence reviewed in sections 4.3–5 indicates that non-royal individuals had access to the same corpus of glorification spells as royal individuals did during the Old Kingdom. Therefore the reason that these are inscribed in royal tombs but not in private tombs of that period cannot be because the occupants of the latter were barred

[97] See sections 3.5.2 and 4.5.1. [98] See references cited in notes 68–9 and 93.

[99] Cf. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 49 and 170.

[100] Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, pp. 215 and 225–6.

[101] See H. Hays, 'Between Agency and Identity in Ancient Egyptian Ritual', in R. Nyord and A. Kjølby (eds), *'Being in Ancient Egypt': Thoughts on Agency, Materiality and Cognition* (Oxford, 2009), p. 19.

[102] For parallels to this situation in other societies, see Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, p. 78 note 202, and literature cited there, in particular, P. Culham, 'Magical Texts and Popular Literacy: Vulgarization, Iterations, or Appropriations?', in R. Modiano, I. Searle, and P. Shillingsburg (eds), *Voice, Text, Hypertext: Emerging Practices in Textual Studies* (Seattle and London, 2004), pp. 144–61, especially p. 151.

from enjoying the benefits of their recitation or participating in the sort of afterlife to which they granted admittance.[103] In other words, the empirical evidence provided by the distribution of extant texts for the hereafter in royal and non-royal tombs of the Old Kingdom cannot be interpreted in the way that proponents of the theory of the democratization of the afterlife have traditionally interpreted it. This, in effect, removes the remaining foundation of that theory. But it also leaves us with a difficult question. If non-royal individuals did have access to and expected to benefit from glorification spells during the Old Kingdom, why did they not display these in their tombs or on objects deposited in them, as royalty did?

4.6.1. Reasons for non-display of spells for the afterlife in private tombs of the Old Kingdom: royal diktat or autonomous choice?

According to one view, non-royal individuals did not display glorification spells in their tombs because they were prevented from doing so by rules of decorum. Thus Hays has remarked 'If in the Old Kingdom the same mortuary literature was *used* by non-royal persons, then the physical absence of mortuary texts in their tombs must instead be a sign of the constraints of *decorum*, not lack of access to the afterlife and the texts and rituals by which it was attained.'[104] Similarly, Morales defines the end of the Old Kingdom as a time when 'the rules of decorum that limited the use of—not the practice of or knowledge about—the Pyramid Texts loosened'.[105]

Decorum has been defined as 'a set of rules and practices defining what may be represented pictorially with captions, displayed, and possibly written down, in which context and in what form'.[106] In my opinion, the use of this term by Hays and Morales is problematic for two reasons. First, since nowhere did the ancient Egyptians ever codify or set down what the rules of decorum actually were, modern scholars have been left to infer them. This opens the field for speculation. As a result, virtually any ancient Egyptian phenomenon for which no explanation is readily available can be accounted for by attributing it to decorum, making this the default solution to any puzzle or problem, in much the same way as doctors in the Middle Ages attributed all diseases for which there was no obvious diagnosis to the baneful influence of demons.

Second, implicit in the way that Hays and Morales use the term decorum is the assumption that its rules, whatever they were, must have been imposed from above. Non-royal individuals in the Old Kingdom could not display Pyramid Text or other

[103] Cf. Mathieu in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, p. 257; Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, pp. 118–19; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 5 and 28–9; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, p. 666.

[104] Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 118.

[105] Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 28–9. Cf. ibid., pp. 72–3.

[106] J. Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2007), p. 15.

spells in their tombs because they were not allowed to. But how would kings have been able to enforce a rule like this? At Giza where tombs were rigidly laid out according to a predetermined plan, there is still ample evidence of unplanned tombs erected by individuals who wished to be buried near their relatives.[107] At the same site, the settlement associated with the pyramid complex of Menkaure was allowed to expand until it encroached upon the courtyard of his mortuary temple, turning the area into what has been described as a 'sacred slum'.[108] There are examples of non-royal intrusion into Old Kingdom royal burial precincts from later periods as well.[109] This shows that there were limits on the extent of even a ruler's power to influence or control the use of mortuary space. Kings could make decrees prohibiting this sort of encroachment,[110] but as Bolshakov has noted, it is invariably the case that 'any psychologically ingrained aspiration prevails [over] even the strictest bureaucratic regulations'.[111]

Another possibility suggested by Hays is that the distribution of extant texts for the hereafter in royal and non-royal tombs of the Old Kingdom was determined to some extent by fashion.[112] It reflected social distinctions in this world rather than privileges granted in the next one. As he puts it, 'Religious texts were not inscribed in tombs so as to display the keys to heaven as a proof that a certain social group had access to them while others did not. Their inscription was motivated by the exercise of taste according to an unwritten code of practice, an *habitus* of self-constructed distinction.' The adjective 'self-constructed' is key here, in my opinion. Although this explanation may not provide all the answers, it has the advantage of allowing for an element of choice, which may have been a more significant factor than is generally supposed.

It is worth remembering that we have unambiguous evidence for the recitation of glorification spells for the benefit of non-royal individuals as early as the fourth dynasty, at which time they were presumably being recited for kings as well, yet neither displayed such texts in their tombs until much later. In this instance, the failure of non-royal individuals to display them can hardly have been due to the fact that they were somehow constrained from imitating the practice of their rulers, since both rulers and subjects were following the same practice. In the Middle Kingdom, as Hays and others have observed, only non-royalty displayed texts for the afterlife in their tombs.[113] The walls of the kings' pyramids were left uninscribed. One could hardly argue that this was

[107] See A. Bolshakov, Review of K. Kromer, *Nezlet Batran: Eine Mastaba aus dem Alten Reich bei Giseh (Ägypten)*, in *BiOr* 51 (1994), p. 62; M. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* 1 (Cairo, 1999), p. 38 note 166.

[108] M. Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids* (London, 1997), p. 137.

[109] See e.g. D. Silverman, 'Non-Royal Burials in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery and the Early Twelfth Dynasty', in D. Silverman, W.K. Simpson, and J. Wegner (eds), *Archaism and Innovation: Studies in the Culture of Middle Kingdom Egypt* (New Haven and Philadelphia, 2009), pp. 82–3.

[110] See A. Leahy, 'A Protective Measure at Abydos in the Thirteenth Dynasty', *JEA* 75 (1989), pp. 41–60; S. Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs: The Culture of Life and Death* (Chichester, 2011), pp. 133–5.

[111] Bolshakov, *BiOr* 51 (1994), p. 62.

[112] Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 119.

[113] See reference cited in the preceding note.

because they were denied the option of inscribing them with texts. Rather, what is involved in both of these instances is a choice of display.

In the fifth dynasty, both royalty and non-royalty began using the subterranean parts of their tombs for the display of texts. The earliest example of a decorated burial chamber in a private tomb dates to the reign of Djedkare Izezi, while the first royal example is that in the pyramid of his successor Unis.[114] Thus non-royal individuals began decorating their burial chambers before kings did.[115] They chose to do so with scenes depicting the tomb owner seated before an offering table accompanied by a list of offerings. Subsequently, kings made a different choice, opting for texts alone rather than a combination of text and image, although these included the spells to be recited in conjunction with the offering ritual.

There is no ready explanation for why these particular choices were made, unless one has recourse to the non-answer of decorum. One possibility is that the offering scene was selected for non-royal burial chambers because 'participation in the offering meal is itself a social act and, in sacramental terms, the presentation of such a repast is a symbol of the process of social reintegration which the deceased is supposed to undergo'.[116] In other words, the offering table scene substituted not only for those glorification spells intended to provide sustenance for the tomb owner after his death, but for those intended to secure his acceptance among the hierarchy of gods and blessed spirits in the afterlife as well. This, however, is speculation. What is important is the fact that in choosing to decorate their burial chambers as they did, the owners of these tombs made an autonomous decision. They were not consciously imitating or deviating from a pre-existing royal model, since no such model existed at the time when the first private burial chamber received its decoration.

4.6.2. Why display spells for the afterlife in tombs? Monumentalization and its function

If we are really to understand why non-royal tomb owners did not display glorification spells in their tombs or on objects deposited in them during the Old Kingdom, as royalty did, we need to revert to the question touched upon briefly in section 4.6.1: what was the purpose of displaying such spells in a tomb? Was it only to mark social distinctions as Hays has argued, or did it have a more profound significance? Did it actually benefit the tomb owner in the next world? If so, how did it do so?

[114] See N. Kanawati, *Decorated Burial Chambers of the Old Kingdom* (Cairo, 2010), pp. 43–50; Kanawati in Daoud, Bedier, and Abd El-Fatah (eds), *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan* 2, pp. 55–8; A. Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom* (Wiesbaden, 1997), pp. 113–17.

[115] And not at the same time, as stated in Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 261.

[116] See M. Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 8 and 10.

This leads us to a consideration of the phenomenon known as monumentalization.[117] Monumentalizing a text is generally taken to mean incorporating it in the fabric of a monument in some manner, for example, inscribing or painting it on a wall, lintel, door jamb, or other architectural element.[118] Hays has interpreted the term in a rather wider sense, however, since he likens the Pyramid Texts in their physical manifestation to 'monumental presentations on shrouds, coffins, and chapel walls'.[119] Thus, for him, something is monumentalized if it is displayed on a shroud, coffin, or other object deposited in a tomb. It does not have to be incorporated in the actual fabric of the monument. By his definition, therefore, a ritual text written on a papyrus roll placed next to a mummy in a burial chamber would be no less monumentalized than one inscribed on that chamber's walls.

Why were tombs equipped with ritual texts in this manner? One answer frequently given to this question is that the texts eternalised the rite, 'constituting not simply a record of it, but a performance as well, one which would go on being repeated perpetually at each appropriate moment without reference to or involvement from any human agency'.[120] The underlying conception is that 'À l'écriture est attribuée la capacité d'abolir les limitations temporelles de la parole et de l'étendre à l'infini.'[121]

If this really was the case, why would anyone forego the opportunity to have copies of such texts present in their tomb? One thinks in particular of the rulers of the Middle Kingdom whose pyramids were devoid of any inscription. Various explanations for the absence of ritual texts in their monuments are possible. First, they may have had them originally, but these were written on perishable materials like papyrus and have not survived.[122] Second, the rites may have been perpetuated by other means, perhaps through performances using copies of texts kept elsewhere. Third, the idea that monumentalized ritual texts perpetuate or eternalize rites may be incorrect. Perhaps they do only provide a visual record of its effects after all. If so, inscribing them on a tomb wall or on an object deposited in a tomb will not have had any impact on the tomb owner's fate in the next world.

We have no way of testing either of the first two explanations. The third seems unlikely to me, given the distinctive grammatical features of many ritual texts that were deposited in tombs, in particular, their regular use of future tense verbal forms referring to actions that have yet to be performed or events that have yet to occur, as well as the frequency with which the sentences introduced by such verbal forms are qualified by

[117] For comments on this phenomenon, see Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 13, 91–2, 115, 201, 203, 228, and 259–62.

[118] Cf. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, p. 10.

[119] Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 260.

[120] M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), p. 64.

[121] J. Assmann, *Images et rites de la mort dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Paris, 2000), p. 53.

[122] J. Wegner, 'The Tomb of Senwosret III at Abydos: Considerations on the Origins and Development of the Royal Amduat-Tomb', in Silverman, Simpson, and Wegner (eds), *Archaism and Innovation*, p. 148.

adverbs like 'daily' or 'for ever'. Such features indicate that the acts or events in question were envisaged as occurring as part of a perpetual cycle rather than only once.[123]

Another piece of evidence supporting this conclusion is the fact that some religious texts and representations inscribed in tombs show evidence of having been maliciously defaced. Some of the earliest examples occur in the second dynasty cemetery at Helwan where numerous stone slabs depicting a deceased person seated before an offering table have been discovered in tombs. These depictions are accompanied by texts listing the names and titles of the individual as well as the names of the various offerings. In some cases, the face of the tomb owner has been deliberately damaged.[124] The motivation for this is difficult to understand unless the image and accompanying writing were believed to eternalize the performance of the offering cult, thus ensuring the perpetual provision of food and drink for the tomb owner.[125] Damaging his face would have been a means of preventing him from consuming the offerings. A rather later royal example occurs in the tomb of the nineteenth dynasty usurper Amenmessu in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes (no. 10). A copy of the Litany of the Sun inscribed in painted relief in this tomb was carefully effaced after his fall from power. As Hornung remarks, this shows that it must have been regarded as important for his well-being in the next world.[126]

Perhaps inscribing or depositing ritual texts in tombs was seen as a complement to the performance of the original rite: a means, but not the only means, of perpetuating its effects. The performance itself produced effects that were permanent, so there was no absolute need to extend its temporal efficacy by other methods. Nevertheless, the written version reinforced what the spoken one accomplished, and thus had a value of its own even if it was not an essential prerequisite for the well-being of the tomb owner in the afterlife. This could explain why not every tomb was equipped with such texts, but also why those that were sometimes suffered the attacks of vandals. In later periods of Egyptian history, some copies of ritual texts deposited in tombs made use of alternative, unetymological orthographies of their constituent words. This allowed them to express multiple layers of meaning, enhancing the reifying power of the recited text and extending its efficacy in new directions.[127] In cases like this, the written text not only reinforced, but actually improved upon, its spoken counterpart. However, we have no evidence for texts employing such orthographies as early as the Old Kingdom.

[123] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 53; M. Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 38–41.

[124] E. Köhler and J. Jones, *Helwan 2: The Early Dynastic and Old Kingdom Funerary Relief Slabs* (Rahden, 2009), p. 5 note 8; section 2.2.1.

[125] Köhler and Jones, *Helwan 2*, pp. 93–4.

[126] E. Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei) nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches* 2 (Geneva, 1977), p. 20.

[127] See M. Smith, 'Bodl. MS. Egypt. a. 3(P) and the Interface Between Temple Cult and the Cult of the Dead', in J. Quack (ed.), *Ägyptische Rituale der griechisch-römischen Zeit* (Tübingen, 2014), pp. 151–4.

4.6.3. Access vs. display: summary

The initial appearance of Pyramid Text spells and related texts in private tombs near the end of the Old Kingdom or slightly later certainly marks a change from earlier practice. This was not a change of ritual or belief that widened access to the texts in question, however, but a change in what was selected for display in the burial context. No ancient Egyptian source tells us why this occurred. We have examined various theories which seek to explain why it did in section 4.6.1. The evidence that we have scrutinized makes it unlikely that the change was due to the sudden relaxation of an externally imposed constraint that had limited choice in this sphere previously. It is more probable that it reflects a shift in the configuration of customary practice, perhaps as a result of wider social trends like expansion in the use of writing or the increased influence of local traditions, rather than a dictate from some higher agency.[128]

4.7. FROM THE PYRAMID TEXTS TO THE COFFIN TEXTS

4.7.1. Religious change and political change from the end of the Old Kingdom to the Middle Kingdom

Some scholars adopt a schematic view of ancient Egyptian history in which each successive political phase brings with it a new and distinctive religious ethos.[129] But religious change is not necessarily linked to political change; one can happen without the other. As Shaw has pointed out, cultural and social patterns and trends do not always fit neatly within the framework of dynasties, kingdoms, and intermediate periods that we are accustomed to use in studying the political history of Egypt. Sometimes they transcend, or even conflict with, that framework.[130] In fact, the disjunction between boundaries demarcating individual stages of socio-cultural development and those separating successive phases of political change is a phenomenon well attested throughout Egyptian history.[131]

[128] Cf. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 102–3 notes 274 and 277.

[129] See, for example, J. Assmann, *Ägypten: Eine Sinngeschichte* (Munich, 1996).

[130] See I. Shaw, 'Preface', in I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2003), pp. v–vi.

[131] For examples from various periods. see J. Quack, 'Grab und Grabausstattung im späten Ägypten', in A. Berlejung and B. Janowski (eds), *Tod und Jenseits im alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt* (Tübingen, 2009), p. 597; L. Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies from Ancient Egypt* (Chicago, 1995), p. 13; S. Quirke, Review of M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: A Study and an Anthology*, in *JEA* 78 (1992), p. 332; H. Willems, Review of S. Seidlmayer, *Gräberfelder aus dem Übergang vom Alten zum Mittleren Reich: Studien zur Archäologie der Ersten Zwischenzeit*, in *BiOr* 52 (1995), p. 622.

This is certainly true with regard to conceptions of the afterlife. As we have seen, the greatest single change in that sphere occurred during the fifth dynasty when the god Osiris first began to be the focus of belief and aspiration pertaining to the next world. Significantly, this took place midway through a period that is normally recognized as one of the major sub-divisions of Egypt's political history, the Old Kingdom, rather than coinciding with the start or end of such a period, and in the middle of a dynasty as well.

Conversely, conceptions of the afterlife seem to have been little affected by the far-reaching political changes that marked the end of the Old Kingdom, the First Intermediate Period, and the start of the Middle Kingdom. As shown in the preceding sections of this chapter, the idea that the upheavals which occurred then triggered a change in ideas about the hereafter, whereby privileges formerly restricted to royalty—identification with Osiris and integration into the hierarchy of the gods in the next world—were now usurped by non-royal individuals who had gained access to copies of the spells and rituals that were believed to confer them, is not supported by the evidence at our disposal. Instead, already in the Old Kingdom, Egyptian rulers and their subjects shared the same aspirations for the afterlife and hoped to fulfil these by the same means.

Contrary to what is often said in the literature, these aspirations did not include identification with Osiris. Rather, both royalty and non-royalty were distinct from and subordinate to the god. They hoped to associate themselves with Osiris as devotees and enjoy the benefits that this status was supposed to confer: provision of one's needs and eternal life in the hereafter. Some Pyramid Text spells do identify the deceased king with Osiris, and with other gods as well, but these identifications are ritually contingent. Statements in these spells to the effect that the king is Osiris or will become Osiris, like those identifying him with other deities, are valid in the specific context of the rite during which they are uttered, but not beyond this. No such statements are attested for non-royal individuals during the Old Kingdom. This is not because they had no access to the sort of spells in which they occur, but because they did not display these in their tombs.

What has just been said about the relationship between Osiris and the deceased in the Old Kingdom is also true of the period that we are about to examine. Thus the Egyptian conception of this relationship remained essentially the same from the end of the Old Kingdom to the Middle Kingdom, despite the political changes that took place during the intervening years. There were nevertheless some important developments in terms of how and in what contexts ideas about that relationship were presented, and new sources inform us about aspects of it which are not mentioned in earlier ones. One of the most significant of these developments was that spells for the afterlife, including some already attested in the Pyramid Texts, began to be inscribed on coffins and other items of burial equipment belonging to non-royal people. These are known as the Coffin Texts.

4.7.2. The date of origin of the Coffin Texts and their relationship to the Pyramid Texts

The date of the earliest extant Coffin Text spells has been the subject of much dispute. As we saw in section 4.3.1, some may be as old as the sixth dynasty. One view places the origin of the Coffin Texts corpus squarely within the First Intermediate Period. Another maintains that this is primarily a development of the Middle Kingdom.[132] However, the detailed work of Morales on the transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom has identified a number of objects inscribed with Coffin Texts that can be assigned to the First Intermediate Period with a fair degree of certainty.[133]

Another disputed question is the relationship of the Coffin Texts to the Pyramid Texts.[134] Recent research has tended to highlight their similarities and points of convergence rather than their differences, so much so that some have claimed that the two collections of spells are essentially one, both belonging to a single continuously developing corpus whose origins go back to the Old Kingdom. The most comprehensive argument for the essential identity of the Pyramid and Coffin Texts has been advanced by Mathieu.[135] This is based upon five points: (1) a number of spells are common to both collections; (2) both can be found inscribed on the same types of object; (3) the oldest Coffin Text spells are not much later than the earliest attestations of the Pyramid Texts; (4) both Pyramid and Coffin Texts contain the same range of spell genres and display the influence of Heliopolitan religious thought; and (5) the same groups of people had access to and made use of both.

All of this may well be true, but it hardly proves the identity of the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts. The same points can be made in relation to the Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead, but one would certainly not argue on this basis that those two collections of spells are identical, despite the fact that there are connections between them and a certain amount of development from one to the other.[136] One is justified in speaking about the identity of individual spells or sequences of spells when these are

[132] See Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, p. 6, for literature on this debate, to which add Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, pp. 133–5.

[133] See the chronological list of sources in Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, pp. 850–1. Ibid., pp. 688–9, and in *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 330–1, he discusses the dating of some of these to the First Intermediate Period in more detail.

[134] For bibliography, see Smith in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/70g428wj, pp. 5–6; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 101–2 note 273; Lapp, *SAK* 43 (2014), p. 222 note 117; and L. Gestermann, 'Pyramidentexte und Sargtexte im Alten und Mittleren Reich', in B. Janowski and D. Schwermer (eds), *Grab-, Sarg-, Bau- und Votivinschriften* (Gütersloh, 2011), pp. 216–18.

[135] See Mathieu in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, pp. 247–62.

[136] See W. Grajetzki, 'Another Early Source for the Book of the Dead: The Second Intermediate Period Burial D 25 at Abydos', *SAK* 34 (2006), pp. 212–13; G. Lapp, *The Papyrus of Nu (BM EA 10477)* (London, 1997), p. 56.

transmitted from an earlier collection to a later one, but not about the identity of the collections themselves.

A more nuanced view has been expressed by Willems.[137] He notes that, although Pyramid Text spells do appear on the coffins of non-royal individuals after the end of the Old Kingdom, the number of these is relatively circumscribed, a point already made by de Buck, who says that on such coffins 'they form a distinct body of texts, a foreign body clearly distinct from the other spells'.[138] Willems also draws attention to certain features of the Coffin Texts that distinguish them unambiguously from their earlier counterpart, for instance, the marked emphasis on the importance of family links in many Coffin Text spells, in particular, those between father and son, and the patterns of social organization that these texts presuppose.

Equally, one could add, other spells in this corpus emphasize the rhetorical eloquence of the deceased, their mastery of words, and their knowledge of the arcane and recondite, to a much greater extent than the Pyramid Texts do.[139] The ability to speak persuasively and justify one's actions is important not only for aspirants to the afterlife, but for the deity whom they hope to encounter there as well, as is shown by Coffin Text Spell 1130.[140] Moreover, the 'god's domain', a term denoting the necropolis and, by extension, the underworld, is of central importance in the Coffin Texts as a locus for the deceased's activities in the hereafter. In telling contrast, the term occurs only once in the Pyramid Texts.[141] It would not be difficult to adduce further examples to illustrate the same point: despite the many features they share in common, the 'world' of the Coffin Texts and that of the Pyramid Texts are figuratively and literally two very different places.

There are also quite significant quantitative differences between the two corpora. Of those Pyramid Text spells in use during the Old Kingdom, only 47.2 per cent were transmitted into the Middle Kingdom.[142] The remainder fell out of use entirely. It is difficult to argue identity between two collections of texts when one incorporates less than a half of the other. Moreover, the vast majority of those Pyramid Text spells that were transmitted are those that have been classified as sacerdotal spells rather than personal spells, in other words, utterances recited for the deceased's benefit by others.[143] According to Morales, the reason for this is that the different regions of

[137] Willems, *Les Textes des Sarcophages et la démocratie*, pp. 213–14 note 213; Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 201 note 238.

[138] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1 (Chicago, 1935), p. xi.

[139] See Coulon in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, pp. 119–42; Hays, ibid., pp. 190–1, both noting the similarity, in this respect, of the Coffin Texts to non-royal tomb inscriptions of the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period. For the emphasis upon rhetorical facility in the latter, see also sections 3.5.2 and 4.5.1.

[140] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7 (Chicago, 1961), pp. 461–71.

[141] See R. Hannig, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch I: Altes Reich und Erste Zwischenzeit* (Mainz am Rhein, 2003), pp. 1020–2.

[142] Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, p. 660 note 1931.

[143] Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, p. 61 note 154. For the distinction between the two categories, see section 3.7.3.

Egypt already had their own locally composed personal spells at the time when the Pyramid Texts began to be disseminated throughout the country and thus had no need to import new ones from elsewhere.[144] As a result, while both Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts include personal spells, there is very little overlap between those of the two corpora.

Willems suggests that some of the material in the Coffin Texts may reflect cultic activities that took place in the so-called *ka*-mansions, where non-royal individuals, in particular regional governors, were venerated as local patrons.[145] He points out that the provincial governor Medunefer at Balat, possessor of some of the earliest extant texts of this type, also had a *ka*-mansion.[146] He also proposes that the cult celebrated in the *ka*-mansion may have already commenced while the beneficiary was still alive.[147] The idea that a person's *ka* may have received a cult before his death has been proposed by others as well.[148]

Morales has identified six different streams whereby texts for the afterlife were transmitted from the Old Kingdom to the Middle Kingdom. According to him, these incorporate: (1) the Pyramid Texts attested in royal pyramids of the Old Kingdom; (2) later Pyramid Texts which appear in innovative textual programmes in private contexts; (3) Old Kingdom non-royal ritual texts (designated by him as old Coffin Texts); (4) new ritual texts produced during the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom (designated by him as new Coffin Texts); (5) Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts combined in textual programmes; and (6) recitations and performances transmitted orally during the Pyramid Age.[149] His model is hypothetical, to some extent, since we have more evidence for some of these streams than others. Nevertheless, it illustrates that the process of transmission undergone by these texts was more complex than Mathieu and others have supposed. Far from being identical with each other, the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts are more accurately described, with Morales, as 'two interlocking corpora in the same tradition'.[150]

[144] Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, pp. 816–17.

[145] Willems, *Les Textes des Sarcophages et la démocratie*, pp. 221–7; Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, pp. 207–11 and 228–9.

[146] Ibid., p. 211 note 271 and p. 227; Willems, *Les Textes des Sarcophages et la démocratie*, p. 227 note 208. Cf. G. Soukiassian, M. Wuttmann, and L. Pantalacci, *Balat VI: Le palais des gouverneurs de l'époque de Pépy II. Les sanctuaires de ka et leurs dépendances* (Cairo, 2002), pp. 57–84.

[147] Willems, *Les Textes des Sarcophages et la démocratie*, pp. 224–5; Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, pp. 210–11.

[148] See e.g. T. Rzeuska, 'Funerary Customs and Rites on the Old Kingdom Necropolis', in M. Bárta, F. Coppens, and J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2005* (Prague, 2006), p. 354 note 2; Y. Shirai, 'Ideal and Reality in Old Kingdom Private Funerary Cults', in Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, p. 325–6; Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, pp. 194–210; A. Bolshakov, 'The Moment of the Establishment of the Tomb-Cult in Ancient Egypt', *Archiv für Orientforschung* 18 (1991/1992), pp. 204–18.

[149] Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 104–23; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, p. 840.

[150] Ibid., pp. 847–8.

4.8. OSIRIS AND THE DECEASED IN THE COFFIN TEXTS

4.8.1. Coffin Texts spells that distinguish the deceased and Osiris

As we saw in the previous chapter, the Pyramid Texts configure the relationship between Osiris and the deceased king in two different ways. Some assert that the king is distinct from Osiris, others identify him with that god. Some spells do both.[151] Precisely the same is true of the Coffin Texts. Many Coffin Text spells clearly distinguish Osiris and the deceased from each other. Thus we find utterances where the dead person is said to come to Osiris (Spells 36,[152] 557,[153] 1082,[154] 1085),[155] enter before him or be at his side (37,[156] 451),[157] see him (557,[158] 1087),[159] worship him (789,[160] 1082,[161] 1085),[162] protect him from Seth (790),[163] gather his bones, cause his flesh and limbs to flourish daily (80),[164] fashion or treat him (94,[165] 451),[166] give him life (251),[167] be like him (1130),[168] enter the god's house and have knowledge of him (155),[169] board his *neshmet*-bark (409),[170] be among his followers (155,[171] 156,[172] 229,[173] 237,[174] 346,[175] 413,[176] 572,[177] 604,[178] 609,[179] 1162),[180] be in the midst of those who eat bread in Osiris's presence (228),[181] be *imakh* before Osiris (805),[182] cook for the god and attend to him (1048);[183] spells in which the deceased identifies himself as the son of Osiris (94),[184] or the god is said to be his father (228,[185] 346,[186] 609,[187] 727,[188] 790);[189] and spells in which Osiris speaks to or about the deceased

[151] See sections 3.7.1, 3.7.2, and 3.7.3.
[152] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 135f.
[153] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6 (Chicago, 1956), p. 158g.
[154] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 354e. [155] Ibid., p. 357b.
[156] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, pp. 151c–152b.
[157] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5 (Chicago, 1954), p. 320a.
[158] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 158g.
[159] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 366a. [160] Ibid., p. 2l–m.
[161] Ibid., p. 355a. [162] Ibid., p. 357b. [163] Ibid., p. 2s.
[164] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2 (Chicago, 1938), pp. 41i–42a. [165] Ibid., p. 68b.
[166] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5, p. 320d.
[167] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3 (Chicago, 1947), p. 351b.
[168] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 471c–d. Cf. ibid., p. 262f–g (Spell 1031).
[169] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, pp. 290b and 307c–308b.
[170] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5, p. 227c.
[171] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, p. 291f. [172] Ibid., p. 310b.
[173] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 297l. [174] Ibid., p. 314b–c.
[175] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4 (Chicago, 1951), p. 378d.
[176] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5, p. 243d–e.
[177] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 176h. [178] Ibid., p. 218f.
[179] Ibid., p. 223f–g. [180] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 506c.
[181] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, pp. 266a and 267i.
[182] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 10l. [183] Ibid., pp. 300c and 301c.
[184] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, p. 69a.
[185] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 282a.
[186] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 378d.
[187] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 223g. [188] Ibid., p. 357h.
[189] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 2p.

(106),[190] gives him commands (697),[191] or provides him with protection (804).[192] Just as in the Pyramid Texts, Osiris can be a threat. In one spell (229), the deceased asks to be saved from the fishermen of Osiris;[193] in another (236), he beseeches the executioners of the god to be far from him, while asserting that they and the messengers of Osiris will be powerless to harm him.[194] Conversely, in Spell 548, the dead person threatens to swallow the head of Osiris.[195]

4.8.2. Coffin Text spells that identify the deceased with Osiris

But other Coffin Text spells identify the deceased with Osiris or predicate activities of him as that deity. Some versions of Spell 4, for instance, say that the deceased will become Osiris.[196] In Spell 42, the god Geb says that the dead person outreaches him 'in this, his name of Osiris'.[197] In Spell 80, the deceased refers to the time when he became Osiris.[198] In Spell 227 the deceased asserts several times 'I am Osiris.'[199] He says the same thing in Spells 237,[200] 251,[201] and 828.[202] Spell 269 claims 'This NN lives as Osiris.'[203] Spell 507 says with respect to the deceased, 'This is Osiris who planted the hoof as Osiris.'[204] In Spell 577 the dead person asserts 'I am Osiris as one who covers up his seat while the Foremost of the westerners is providing heads.'[205] In Spell 599 he claims 'I am Osiris, son of Geb, born of Nut.'[206] In one version of the above-cited Spell 227, the title is actually given as *ḫpr.w m Wsỉr*, 'A form as Osiris'.[207]

4.8.3. Spells that both distinguish the deceased from Osiris and identify him with the god

A further complication is that in the Coffin Texts, as in the Pyramid Texts, the dead person is sometimes both identified with Osiris and distinguished from the god in the

[190] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, pp. 116b and 117a.
[191] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 331k–l.
[192] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 10a.
[193] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 295h.
[194] Ibid., pp. 304f–305f.
[195] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 145d.
[196] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 12d.
[197] Ibid., p. 178d.
[198] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, p. 40h.
[199] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, pp. 260c and e, 261d, 262c, 264c, and 265c. In one version (Sq3C), the first person singular independent pronouns are replaced by second person singular feminine ones, thus yielding the repeated address 'You are Osiris.'
[200] Ibid., pp. 309b and 313c.
[201] Ibid., p. 350h.
[202] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, pp. 28v and 29q.
[203] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 7k. One version (Sq6C) has 'This NN lives and appears as Osiris.'
[204] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 92b.
[205] Ibid., p. 193c.
[206] Ibid., p. 215g–h.
[207] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 365e (Sq3C).

same spell. Thus while in one passage in Coffin Text Spell 80 the deceased speaks of having become Osiris, in others he claims that he gathers the god's bones, causes his vessels, flesh, and limbs to flourish, and gives him food offerings.[208] In one passage of Spell 228 the deceased claims to have appeared as Osiris,[209] whereas in another he refers to that god as his father.[210] In two passages in Spell 237 the deceased proclaims that he is Osiris, but elsewhere in the same spell he says that he belongs to the house of Osiris, watches over it, veils the god's weariness, eases his suffering for him, and enters among his followers.[211] The deceased claims to be Osiris in one passage of Spell 251, but in another he is said to give life to that deity.[212] Although one sentence in Spell 269 proclaims that the deceased lives as Osiris, another treats the two as distinct, by asserting that he is the bush of life which went forth from that god.[213] While one version of Spell 227 has the title 'A form as Osiris', another one (P. Gardiner II) has *ḫpr m stỉ n Wsỉr*, 'Becoming a substitute/replacement for Osiris', instead of this, and so clearly distinguishes the god and the spell's intended beneficiary.[214]

4.8.4. Spells that identify the deceased with Osiris and with other deities as well

Finally, some Coffin Text spells that identify the deceased with Osiris identify him with one or more other deities as well. Thus in one passage of Spell 42, Geb says that the deceased outreaches him as Osiris, but in other passages the dead person is said to benefit from various acts performed for him as the Great of Magic and as Sokar, and to be mighty as Horus.[215] In the short offering formula in Spell 599, the deceased claims to be Osiris, but in the two similar formulas immediately before this one (597 and 598) he claims to be Horus the son of Osiris and a follower of Osiris,[216] while in the two immediately after it (600 and 601), he asserts that he is Horus the son of Osiris and Re-Atum.[217] As we have seen, the deceased proclaims that he is Osiris several times in Spell 227, but elsewhere in the same spell he claims to be Horus, Horus the Elder, Anubis, and the Lord of All.[218]

[208] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, pp. 38h–39a and 41i–42a.
[209] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 276b. [210] Ibid., p. 282a.
[211] Ibid., pp. 311a–d and 314b–c. [212] Ibid., p. 351b.
[213] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 6c–d.
[214] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 260a.
[215] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 178e–j.
[216] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, pp. 214g and 215e. [217] Ibid., p. 216b and h.
[218] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, pp. 262k, 263f, and 264g–265b.

4.8.5. Resolving the paradox: the technique of ritual identification in the Coffin Texts

We can explain these confusing and apparently contradictory statements in the same way as we did those in the Pyramid Texts.[219] Like the spells in that corpus, the Coffin Text spells are ritual texts. They are not expositions of ancient Egyptian theology or descriptions of what the Egyptians thought the afterlife would be like. They may contain elements of such expositions or descriptions, but providing these is not their primary purpose. The statements they contain are functional, designed to make things happen. One of the ways in which they do this is by means of the technique of identification. A ritualist reciting a spell may identify himself or another person with a particular deity, but the purpose of the spell is not to transform them permanently into that deity. Claims identifying oneself with a deity, or attributing such identity to another person, are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. They confer a power, status, or attribute associated with the deity in question upon the one thus identified in order to help achieve that end. This is why a person can be identified with more than one deity in the same spell, or identified with a deity in one part of a spell but distinguished from that deity in another part. A ritual can evoke an unlimited number of parallel realities simultaneously, some of which may conflict with each other. Statements affirming identity in this manner are valid within the framework of the rite, inasmuch as they help to achieve its intended effect. But they do not describe an objective or wider reality. The new identities thus attributed are impermanent and transitory. What endures are the consequences, the effects, of the attribution of the new identities, not the identities themselves.

Understanding Coffin Text spells as ritual texts helps us better to comprehend those utterances that identify the deceased with Osiris. He is the divinity with whom they are identified most frequently in the Coffin Texts, since the particular powers and attributes associated with him were of key importance to them as they experienced the transition from this life to the next. But this does not mean that they were supposed to become Osiris on a permanent basis. On the contrary, the deceased's identification with that god was temporary and ritually contingent. It was valid at the moment of the spells' recitation but not beyond that fleeting event. Thus there is no basis for the claim made by some that in the Middle Kingdom the deceased actually aspired to become Osiris.[220]

If the relationship between Osiris and the deceased envisaged in the Coffin Texts was not one of identity, then what was it? What form did the composers and users of the spells in this corpus actually hope or expect it would take in the next world? To answer these questions, we must turn to paratextual, i.e. non-ritual, sources of evidence. As we saw in section 3.9.1, such sources are a more reliable guide to genuine Egyptian

[219] See section 3.8.2.

[220] See, for example, Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 121 note 47.

aspirations for the afterlife than ritual texts are, since they are not subject to the ambiguities inherent in ritual speech. We can apply the same test that was used there in connection with the Pyramid Texts. If a specific statement about the relationship between Osiris and the deceased in a Coffin Text spell is paralleled in or corroborated by paratextual sources, then we are justified in accepting it as evidence of the sort of relationship with the god that the Egyptians actually aspired to have in the afterlife. But if that statement is contradicted by paratexual sources, then it cannot be accepted as evidence of such an aspiration. It was probably deemed to be valid within the context of the ritual in which it was uttered, but had no wider reality beyond the world of the spell.

4.9. PARATEXTUAL EVIDENCE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OSIRIS AND THE DECEASED IN THE FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD AND MIDDLE KINGDOM

4.9.1. Titles and colophons of Coffin Text spells

Fortunately, we have much more paratextual evidence to inform us about genuine Egyptian aspirations for the afterlife during the period when the Coffin Texts were in use than we do for the Old Kingdom. For one thing, titles and colophons are used much more extensively in the Coffin Texts than they are in the Pyramid Texts.[221] Since these comment upon the function of the spells to which they are attached without being embedded in their ritual context, their interpretation is not subject to the same ambiguities that hinder our understanding of the utterances themselves.

It is essential to recognize the distinction between Coffin Text spells and the titles and colophons attached to them in terms of their informational content. The former tell us what happens in the ritual context, the latter what is supposed to happen in the wider world beyond the rite as a consequence of its performance. Awareness of this distinction is important because, as we saw in section 3.8, what ritual texts say and what they are supposed to do are often two different things. There is frequently a disjunction between the contents of a spell and its purpose. Thus attempting to determine what a spell is supposed to do purely on the basis of what it says can be a hazardous enterprise. The actual words of its constituent sentences may only relate indirectly to the aim for which it was recited, even though they are intended to help achieve it. For this reason, the evidence provided by titles and colophons is of particular value.

The titles and colophons of several Coffin Text spells make a clear distinction between Osiris and the deceased. Titles that do so include those of Spells 155 (Entering the house of Osiris of Busiris, being in the following of Osiris),[222] 156 (Being in the

[221] For this sort of paratextual material in the Coffin Texts, see Coulon in Bickel and Mathieu (eds), *D'un monde à l'autre*, pp. 137–42.

[222] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, pp. 290b and 291b and f.

following of Osiris),[223] 227 (Becoming a substitute/replacement for Osiris),[224] 228 (Spell for entering in front and going out behind in the midst of those who eat the bread of Osiris),[225] 329 (Becoming a scribe of the field of offerings for Osiris),[226] 351 (Entering to Osiris),[227] 451 (Spell for entering to Osiris in the west),[228] 467 (Seeing Re, Osiris, and Thoth daily),[229] 876 (Stabilizing the neck of Osiris for him),[230] 1022 (Spell for […] upon Osiris),[231] 1050 (Spell for being a genuine god for Osiris),[232] and 1162 (Spell for being in the field of offerings in the following of Osiris).[233]

The colophons of several Coffin Text spells distinguish Osiris and the deceased as well. That of Spell 82 (= Spell 83) says that knowing the utterance means being an excellent *akh* in the presence of Osiris,[234] that of Spell 228 states that when someone who knows the spell proceeds to the god's domain he will eat bread at the side of Osiris,[235] while that of Spell 339 promises that knowing the utterance means eating bread in the house of Osiris.[236] The colophon of Spell 1079 states that anyone who knows the names of a group of kneeling deities will be with Osiris for ever and will never perish,[237] that of 1087 says anyone who is in Rosetau (here a term denoting the underworld) will see Osiris every day and will never die,[238] while that of Spell 1130 promises that anyone who knows the utterance will be like Re in the eastern sky and Osiris in the underworld.[239]

By contrast, there is not a single spell in the entire corpus of Coffin Texts with a title or colophon that identifies the deceased with Osiris. Hays has cited the title of Spell 227, 'A form as Osiris', as one instance of such in support of his view that in the Middle Kingdom deceased people actually aspired to become that god.[240] But this title is only attested in a single version of that spell (Sq3C). As we have seen, another version which is preserved in P. Gardiner II has the title 'Becoming a substitute/replacement for Osiris' instead, thus clearly distinguishing the deceased and the god. Moreover, Hays has misunderstood the significance of the title 'A form as Osiris'. A number of spells in the Coffin Texts corpus have titles of the pattern 'A form as deity X' or 'Assuming a form as deity X'.[241] But assuming or acquiring a form as deity X is not the same as becoming that deity. Rather, the purpose of such spells was to endow the deceased with a form associated with a particular divinity. This constituted an outward sign, a visible

[223] Ibid., pp. 310b and 311b. [224] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 260a.
[225] Ibid., p. 266a. [226] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 165a.
[227] Ibid., p. 386c. [228] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5, p. 320a.
[229] Ibid., p. 379e. [230] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 85e.
[231] Ibid., p. 243a. [232] Ibid., p. 302d. [233] Ibid., p. 506c.
[234] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, pp. 47b and 48a.
[235] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, pp. 292d and 293d–e.
[236] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, pp. 338l and 339a.
[237] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 351e–f.
[238] Ibid., pp. 365g–366c. [239] Ibid., p. 471c–d.
[240] Hays in Strudwick and Strudwick (eds), *Old Kingdom, New Perspectives*, p. 121 note 47.
[241] On such spells, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 610–17. For lists of Coffin Text exemplars, see H. Buchberger, *Transformation und Transformat* (Wiesbaden, 1993), pp. 82–91; P. Barguet, *Les Textes des Sarcophages égyptiens du Moyen Empire* (Paris, 1986), pp. 424–563.

mark, of his status as a follower or adherent of the divinity in question.[242] That explains why we find both 'A form as Osiris' and 'Becoming a substitute/replacement for Osiris' used as titles for Coffin Text Spell 227. Neither implies genuine identification with the god, and so they are legitimate variants of each other.

The idea that one's status as a member of a particular divinity's following was marked by a form or attributes associated with that divinity is given visual expression in representations where the deceased are represented with the iconography or attributes of Osiris. Good examples occur on a block statue of the twenty-third dynasty now in Cairo (CG 42224) and a mummy cartonnage of the Ptolemaic Period in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Budapest (Inv. 51.2111).[243] In such cases, however, the Osirian figure of the deceased is always clearly labelled as such, to prevent any confusion between it and the god himself.

Other instances in which it has been claimed that the deceased are depicted with Osirian attributes are more dubious, however. In some elite burials of the late Middle Kingdom, anthropoid coffins or mummy masks were adorned with the *nemes*-headcloth and uraeus. According to one view, attributes like these served to identify the deceased with Osiris.[244] But the *nemes*-headcloth and uraeus are attested in depictions of kings long before we have any firm evidence for belief in that god. They are royal, not Osirian, attributes in the first instance. Osiris himself only acquires them because he is said to be a king. Thus there are no grounds for claiming that a coffin or mummy mask embellished with these attributes must portray the owner as that deity.[245] The burial equipment associated with the objects in question also included sceptres and other items of royal insignia, some of which were placed inside the coffin.[246] Such insignia were deemed to be of value to the deceased, not because they were believed to confer royal powers, but because they had other associations, e.g. with rebirth and rejuvenation, which made possession of them desirable in the afterlife.[247]

[242] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 614–15; M. Smith, 'Osiris NN or Osiris of NN?', in B. Backes, I. Munro, and S. Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen: Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuch-Symposiums 2005* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 334–6.

[243] For the first, see G. Legrain, *CGC: Statues et statuettes de rois et de particuliers* 3 (Cairo, 1914), plate 31. For the second, see L. Kákosy, 'Selige und Verdammte in der spätägyptischen Religion', *ZÄS* 97 (1971), p. 100, Abb. 3.

[244] Cf. W. Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt: Life in Death for Rich and Poor* (London, 2003), p. 55; W. Grajetzki, *Tomb Treasures of the Late Middle Kingdom: The Archaeology of Female Burials* (Philadelphia, 2014), pp. 150, 152, and 158; M. Fitzenreiter, 'Jenseits im Diesseits—Die Konstruktion des Ortes der Toten im pharaonischen Ägypten', in C. Kümmel, B. Schweizer, and U. Veit (eds), *Körperinszenierung—Objektsammlung—Monumentalisierung: Totenritual und Grabkult in frühen Gesellschaften* (Münster, New York, Munich, and Berlin, 2008), p. 95; J. Roberson, *The Awakening of Osiris and the Transit of the Solar Barques: Royal Apotheosis in a Most Concise Book of the Underworld and Sky* (Fribourg and Göttingen, 2013), pp. 11–12.

[245] See section 3.1.3. [246] Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt*, p. 55.

[247] See K. Goebs, *Crowns in Egyptian Funerary Literature: Royalty, Rebirth, and Destruction* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 26–7, 47, 92–3, 109, and 376–7; H. Willems, 'The Embalmer Embalmed: Remarks on the Meaning of the Decoration of Some Middle Kingdom Coffins', in J. van Dijk (ed.), *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman te Velde* (Groningen, 1997), pp. 358–9 and 368; Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, pp. 198–9.

In the Coffin Text titles and colophons cited earlier in this section, the deceased is invariably distinguished from Osiris, never identified with him. Thus their evidence corroborates those statements in Coffin Text spells that treat the dead person and the god as two distinct beings and contradicts those that equate them with each other. It follows that we are justified in accepting the former as an accurate reflection of the sort of relationship with the god that the Egyptians actually aspired to have in the afterlife, but not the latter. We can conclude that the composers of the Coffin Text spells envisaged a posthumous existence in which the deceased would interact with Osiris, performing services for the god and enjoying various benefits arising from association with him in return, not one in which they would become Osiris. For them, identification with the god was ritually contingent; it did not apply beyond the boundaries of the ritual domain. There can be no better proof of this than Coffin Text Spell 228. As we saw in section 3.9.1, the deceased's claim to have appeared as Osiris in the body of that utterance is contradicted by both its title and colophon, which make it clear that no such experience is envisaged for the spell's beneficiary, who at all times remains distinct from the god. Once again, this graphically illustrates the disjunction between the contents of a spell and its purpose.

4.9.2. Private offering formulas

The view that interaction rather than identification with Osiris was the aspiration of Egyptians of this time, based on the evidence provided by titles and colophons attached to Coffin Text spells, is confirmed by other sources which are contemporary with the Coffin Text corpus but have no direct connection with it. Among the most important of these are the private offering formulas preserved on sarcophagi, stelae, and other objects of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. Here too, the deceased express the hope that they will interact with Osiris in the manner described in section 4.9.1. They do not aspire to be identified with him. In particular, they desire to enjoy the status of *imakh* before Osiris and to have their requirements supplied by him and other gods in the next world.[248] As in private offering formulas of the Old Kingdom, the specific boon most frequently sought from Osiris by the deceased is the provision of invocation offerings.[249] Other boons he is asked to grant to them include a perfect burial,[250] being righteous in the hearts of the gods, the lords of the west,[251] transfiguration through the recitation of glorification spells by the lector priest,[252] being conducted by one's *ka* or *kas* to the beautiful west,[253] ascending to the great god,[254] and worshipping the god.[255]

[248] See Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 38, 42, 45, 51, 56, and 68.
[249] Ibid., pp. 38, 46 and 57; Lapp, *Typologie der Särge und Sargkammern von der 6. bis 13. Dynastie*, pp. 18, 41, 56, 71, 116, 122, and Blätter 1–35.
[250] Ibid., p. 116 and Bl. 1. [251] Ibid., Bl. 1, 26, 27, and 34.
[252] Ibid., Bl. 1, 19, and 26. [253] Ibid., Bl. 26–7.
[254] Ibid., Bl. 27. [255] Ibid., Bl. 19–22.

Several of the requests found in offering formulas of the eleventh dynasty are for association with Osiris and enjoyment of the benefits conferred thereby.[256] They include wishes that the deceased receive the provisions of the lord of Abydos (2g), the pure bread of Khentiamentiu (2h), necessities from the house of Osiris (ditto), what is elevated on the noble altar before Khentiamentiu (2), the necessities of Osiris (ditto), and everything that Osiris loves (3b), that they travel on the beautiful ways on which the *imakhu* of Osiris and the favoured ones of the great god travel (12a), fare happily and in peace to the horizon, to the place where Osiris is (12b), proceed to the western horizon, to the place where Osiris is (38c), traverse the roads of the god's domain with the followers of Osiris (54a), and that they receive offerings on the beautiful festivals of Osiris or all those of the house of Osiris.[257]

The same is true of a significant number of requests in formulas of the twelfth and thirteenth dynasties.[258] These include wishes that the deceased receive what is heaped upon the noble altar before Khentiamentiu (2k), necessities in the house of Osiris (2), the portion of the chief priest before Osiris (ditto), what goes to the temple of Osiris (ditto), what comes forth upon the offering table of Osiris after his *ka* is sated thereby (ditto), what comes forth upon the noble altar before Osiris (ditto), and every good and pure thing which comes forth upon the offering stand of Osiris (15a), that rites be performed for them in accordance with the writing that Thoth made for Osiris in the house of the god's book (15d), that they ascend to the great god, the lord of the west (31b), that Osiris advance their position beyond that of the great ones who are in the sacred land (47), and that they be given a hand in the *neshmet*-bark by the great god (59b).

Other wishes of this type in offering formulas of the Middle Kingdom are that the deceased be given a pure offering together with the followers of Osiris (65a), that hands bearing offerings be extended to them during the festivals of the necropolis together with the followers of Osiris and the ancestors who existed in the past (72b), that they travel with the great god during the voyage of the god to Poker, while the great *neshmet*-bark is en route during the festivals of the god's domain (73), that the sweet breeze of Khentiamentiu might be at their noses (78c), that they be inundated with offerings and provisions from the offerings of Osiris (83a), that they see the perfection of the great god, lord of Abydos (89b), that they kiss the earth for Khentiamentiu at the feast of the great procession (90a), that they give praise to Osiris during the great procession (91a), and that they sit at the right hand of Osiris in front of the nobles (102a).

[256] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 46–51. The numbers after each wish in the list that follows are those assigned by him in his publication.

[257] Ibid., p. 51.

[258] See ibid., pp. 58–67, 76, and 79. The numbers after each wish in the list that follows are those assigned by Barta in his publication. Some of the sources that he dates to the twelfth dynasty are assigned to the thirteenth in A. Ilin-Tomich, 'Changes in the *ḥtp-dj-nsw* Formula in the Late Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period', *ZÄS* 138 (2011), pp. 20–34.

Six of the wishes listed above (47, 65a, 72b, 73, 83a, and 102a), in conjunction with fourteen others that do not actually mention Osiris by name, constitute what is known as the Abydos Formula.[259] This begins to develop as early as the eleventh dynasty, but does not reach its full form until the twelfth. It is attested on private stelae from Abydos and Thebes. Collectively, the wishes that make up this formula express the deceased's desire to be welcomed at Abydos and allowed to participate in the cult of Osiris there, specifically, the mysteries of that god that were celebrated annually during the inundation season. The formula reflects the rise of Abydos to pre-eminence as a cult centre of Osiris, and the concomitant increase in the importance of the rites performed in his honour there.

Five of the wishes listed above (2, 2h, 2k, 78c, and 90a) refer to Khentiamentiu rather than Osiris. This reflects the fact that by the eleventh dynasty, the former had been absorbed by the latter and was no longer an autonomous deity. Now Khentiamentiu is simply an epithet of Osiris. We will look at this development in greater detail shortly, along with the rise in importance of Abydos and its rites. The important thing to note here is that all the wishes that we have cited in the preceding paragraphs are for some form of interaction with Osiris as a follower or adherent of his. In no instance is it wished that the deceased might be identified with Osiris. There is no evidence of any aspiration on their part to become that god in the hereafter.

4.9.3. Addresses to the living

Some Middle Kingdom stelae from Abydos are inscribed with addresses to the living. These too can express the owner's hope of obtaining benefits from Osiris in the afterlife. One such object, belonging to a twelfth dynasty priest called Mentuhotep, requests those who pass by his tomb to say 'May Osiris Khentiamentiu transform Mentuhotep into an *akh*.'[260] A number of addresses of this type promise that those who recite the offering formula for the deceased will be rewarded by Osiris in various ways in the afterlife: the god will love them or praise them, they will be *imakh* in his presence,

[259] See M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: A Study and an Anthology* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1988), pp. 55–8, 86–8, and 129; J. Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III: A Study of Middle Kingdom State Activity and the Cult of Osiris at Abydos* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996), pp. 62–9 and 417–18; J. Assmann, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien* 2 (Heidelberg, 2005), pp. 38–45; Z. Végh, 'Der Tag des Hörens der Sünden: Untersuchungen zu den abydenischen Osirisfesten', in G. Neunert, H. Simon, A. Verbovsek, and K. Gabler (eds), *Text: Wissen—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung: Beiträge des vierten Münchner Arbeitskreises Junge Aegyptologie (MAJA 4), 29.11 bis 1.12.2013* (Wiesbaden, 2015), pp. 263–5.

[260] W.M.F. Petrie, *Tombs of the Courtiers and Oxyrhynkhos* (London, 1925), pp. 10 and 19, plates 22–3; R. Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember: Egyptian Biographical Texts on Middle Kingdom Stelae* (Prague, 2011), pp. 102–3. For a similar request, see the twelfth dynasty stela of Inyotef (CG 20516) published in H. Lange and H. Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2 (Berlin, 1908), p. 109; H. Lange and H. Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 4 (Berlin, 1902), plate 35.

they will be admitted to his following, and they will receive offerings from his abundance.[261] In no case is it promised that they will become Osiris. The address to the living on a stela belonging to another man called Mentuhotep assures those who remember his name that he will be their protector beside the great god, lord of the sky (= Re) and beside the great god, lord of Abydos (= Osiris).[262] The stela owner claims that he enjoys proximity to the deity. He does not pretend that he is the deity.

4.9.4. Cenotaph chapel stelae

Several of the Abydos stelae were originally set up in private cenotaph chapels in or adjacent to the area known as the terrace of the great god, overlooking the temple of Osiris and the processional way leading from it to his tomb.[263] One specimen, the famous stela of Sehetepibre dating to the reign of Amenemhet III (CG 20538), states that the owner built his chapel there and performed other pious acts so that he could be in the following of the god.[264] Similar statements occur on stelae belonging to other individuals.[265] Once again, the relationship with Osiris envisaged is one of interaction rather than identification. The deceased become devotees of the god and benefit accordingly.

4.9.5. Hymns to Osiris

A number of hymns to Osiris have been preserved from the Middle Kingdom.[266] Some are addressed exclusively to that god, others praise him in conjunction with one or more other deities. Although the specific focus of such hymns is not on the relationship

[261] See Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember*, pp. 44, 46, 130, 133, 167, 172, 188–9, 214–15, 220, and 222.

[262] Ibid., pp. 168 and 179.

[263] See W.K. Simpson, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos: The Offering Chapels of Dynasties 12 and 13* (New Haven and Philadelphia, 1974); Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom*, pp. 129–34; D. O'Connor, 'Abydos, North, *Ka* Chapels and Cenotaphs', in K. Bard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 100–3; D. O'Connor, *Abydos: Egypt's First Pharaohs and the Cult of Osiris* (London, 2009), pp. 92–6; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 522–5; Végh in Neunert, Simon, Verbovsek, and Gabler (eds), *Text: Wissen—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung*, pp. 262–5.

[264] Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, p. 148; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 4, plate 40; Simpson, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, p. 11; Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember*, pp. 220 and 223.

[265] See e.g. ibid., pp. 190–1, 202–3, and 208–9; Végh in Neunert, Simon, Verbovsek, and Gabler (eds), *Text: Wissen—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung*, p. 263.

[266] See D. Franke, 'Middle Kingdom Hymns and Other Sundry Religious Texts—An Inventory', in S. Meyer (ed.), *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World/Ägypten—Tempel der gesamten Welt* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), pp. 96–104, 106–7, and 110; D. Luft, *Osiris-Hymnen: Wechselnde Materialisierungen und Kontexte* 1 (Tübingen, forthcoming).

between Osiris and the deceased, they do allude to it on occasion. One, for example, calls Osiris 'king of those who are yonder' (scil. the deceased), thus recognizing that he has a unique position as ruler of the dead, making them his subjects.[267] In another, the owner of the stela requests Osiris to let him be among his followers.[268] Significantly, no worshipper ever asks to become the god, nor is it ever envisaged that the deceased are capable of doing so. Rather, their aspirations are for what Luiselli has called 'Gottesnähe', i.e. proximity to the deity.[269] It is interesting to note that the majority of these hymns date to the first half of the thirteenth dynasty. Thus the custom of displaying such texts in places where they would be visible to the public began at roughly the same period when the tradition of inscribing texts for the afterlife on coffins and other objects destined for the burial chamber was dying out.[270]

4.9.6. Literary texts

We find occasional references to the Osirian afterlife in Middle Kingdom literary texts. In the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant, for example, the title character weeps because of his mistreatment at the hands of the evil Nemtynakht. The latter tells him not to raise his voice, warning that he is bound for the abode of the lord of silence, an epithet designating Osiris. In effect, Nemtynakht is threatening that if the peasant is not silent he will kill him. The peasant responds with a plea to the lord of silence, asking him to return the property that his adversary has stolen from him so that he can stop crying out to his dreadfulness.[271] Evidently both regard the god as a figure whose very name inspires awe and fear. The journey to the abode of Osiris is a forbidding prospect for both the living and the dead, which would hardly be the case if they expected to become one with him in the hereafter.

4.9.7. Royal texts and representations relating to the afterlife

Although no glorification spells analogous to those of the Pyramid and Coffin Texts are inscribed inside royal tombs of the eleventh and twelfth dynasties,[272] this does not

[267] K. Sethe, *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht* (Hildesheim, 1959), p. 64, line 14. Cf. Franke in Meyer (ed.), *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World*, pp. 96–8.

[268] H. Steckeweh, *Die Fürstengräber von Qâw* (Leipzig, 1936), p. 47 and plate 17a; Franke in Meyer (ed.), *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World*, pp. 102–3.

[269] M. Luiselli, *Die Suche nach Gottesnähe: Untersuchungen zur Persönlichen Frömmigkeit in Ägypten von der Ersten Zwischenzeit bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches* (Wiesbaden, 2011), especially pp. 52, 92–3, 145, 148, and 222–3, for the desire to enjoy such proximity in the specific context of the mysteries of Osiris at Abydos.

[270] Franke in Meyer (ed.), *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World*, pp. 133–4 note 80.

[271] R. Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 13–14.

[272] For the suggestion that the Pyramid Texts inscribed inside the tomb of Sesostrisankh at Lisht may be copies of a now lost collection of spells assembled for Sesostris I, see R. Gundacker, 'Königliche

mean we have no sources that inform us about their occupants' aspirations for the afterlife. Pyramidia from the pyramids of three twelfth dynasty rulers, Sesostris II, Sesostris III, and Amenemhet III, and one of the thirteenth dynasty, Khendjer, have been identified. These are inscribed on all four sides with utterances displaying clear affinities to spells found on contemporary private coffins.[273] The most complete example is the pyramidion of Amenemhet III. The text on its southern face states that Geb is under the ribs of the king, and Osiris lord of Abydos is under his legs, while Sokar-Osiris addresses him, making it clear that these gods are distinct from the ruler and perform services on his behalf. The same text is found on the southern face of the pyramidion of Khendjer.[274]

A stela from the tomb of the eleventh dynasty king Wahankh Inyotef II at Thebes calls him *imakh* before Osiris, thus subordinate to and dependent upon the god.[275] A wooden box found at Deir el-Bahri is inscribed with an offering formula for the benefit of king Mentuhotep II of the same dynasty.[276] The donors in this formula are Anubis and Osiris, who is called lord of Busiris, Khentiamentiu, and lord of Abydos.[277] Anubis is asked to ensure the ruler's burial and he and Osiris to provide him with invocation offerings. An offering table from Sebennytos is inscribed with an offering formula for the benefit of Amenemhet I, the founder of the twelfth dynasty.[278] The donor in the formula is Osiris lord of Busiris. As usual in private offering formulas of this period, the boon sought from him is invocation offerings. Another offering table from Illahun bears two offering formulas for Sesostris II.[279] The donors are Anubis and Osiris lord of Busiris. Both are asked to provide the deceased king with invocation offerings. A third offering table found near the village of Dahdamon in the Faqqus district is inscribed with two offering formulas for the benefit of Amenemhet II.[280] Although Osiris is not mentioned as a donor in either of these, the king has the epithet 'beloved of Osiris' in the first.

Likewise, in foundation plaques and other architectural elements from a building or buildings erected by Sesostris I at Abydos (Kom es-Sultan), that king is called 'beloved of Khentiamentiu' or 'beloved of Osiris Khentiamentiu'.[281] He is 'beloved of Osiris' on

Pyramidentexte im Mittleren Reich? Zur Herkunft und zu einigen Besonderheiten der Pyramidentexte Sesostrisanchs', *SAK* 39 (2010), pp. 121–40; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, p. 268 note 768.

[273] See D. Arnold, *Der Pyramidenbezirk des Königs Amenemhet III. in Dahschur* 1 (Mainz am Rhein, 1987), pp. 14–16 and plates 38–9; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 302–3 note 898, and 305–6, with numerous references to earlier literature.

[274] See Lapp, *Typologie der Särge und Sargkammern von der 6. bis 13. Dynastie*, pp. 226–7.

[275] H. Winlock, 'The Eleventh Egyptian Dynasty', *JNES* 2 (1943), pp. 258–9 and plate 36.

[276] See H. Carter, 'Report on the Tomb of Mentuhotep I at Deir el-Bahari, Known as Bab el-Hoçan', *ASAE* 2 (1901), p. 203.

[277] Or is 'Khentiamentiu, lord of Abydos' here a separate deity?

[278] G. Daressy, 'Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques du Musée d'Alexandrie', *ASAE* 5 (1904), p. 124.

[279] A. Kamal, *CGC: Tables d'offrandes* (Cairo, 1909), p. 38.

[280] Ibid., p. 3.

[281] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 102–3; W.M.F. Petrie, *Abydos* 2 (London, 1903), pp. 20 and 33, plates 23 and 26.

an inscribed fragment from his funerary temple at Lisht.[282] In inscriptions in the funerary temple of Sesostris III at Abydos, he too is called 'beloved of Osiris Khentiamentiu'.[283] Once again, the king is distinguished from, not identified with, the god in all three instances.[284]

Osiris and the deceased ruler are also clearly distinguished in two and three-dimensional representations. A fragmentary scene from the *ka*-mansion of Mentuhotep II at Abydos depicts the king standing before a mummiform figure, which could be Osiris.[285] Colossal statues of a number of eleventh and twelfth dynasty rulers have been discovered which depict the king in a standing pose with legs together and arms crossed, wrapped in a close-fitting tunic or shroud and wearing either the white crown or red crown on his head. The crossed arms may or may not hold *ankh*-signs.[286] Such statues are sometimes described as Osiride statues in the literature on the assumption that they represent the king in the form of Osiris.[287] However, Leblanc has demonstrated convincingly that such statues do not represent the monarch as that god. Rather they depict him in the context of the *sed*-festival; the shrouded examples show him in his embryonic state prior to the renewal of his powers.[288] The connection with this festival is evident from the inscriptions on the pillars associated with these statues. None of them ever refers to the king as Osiris. Rather they treat him as a living being. Moreover, so-called Osiride statues are found in conjunction with other figures clearly showing the king alive, and in a range of different types of temple, not just mortuary temples.[289]

[282] J.-E. Gauthier and G. Jéquier, *Mémoire sur les fouilles de Licht* (Cairo, 1902), p. 20, figure 13.

[283] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, p. 262.

[284] M. Pouls Wegner, *The Cult of Osiris at Abydos: An Archaeological Investigation of the Development of an Ancient Egyptian Sacred Center during the Eighteenth Dynasty* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2002), pp. 92–3, claims that royal epithets like 'beloved of deity X' serve to identify a ruler with the god in question. That this is impossible is shown by numerous ritual scenes in temples in which a king with such an epithet is shown interacting with the deity who is said to love him. A good example is a scene in the hypostyle hall of the temple of Karnak where Ramesses II consecrates the four *meret*-chests in the presence of Amun-Re (H. Nelson, *The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak 1: The Wall Reliefs* [Chicago, 1981], plate 73). The accompanying text identifies the ruler as the beloved of the god, who addresses him as 'my beloved son' and promises to reward him for his piety. Since the god speaks to the king and undertakes to perform various deeds for his benefit, there can hardly be any question of their identification with each other.

[285] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 77 and 79. The preserved parts of the accompanying texts only mention the gods Wepwaut and Khentiamentiu.

[286] See, for example, D. Arnold, *The Temple of Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahari* (New York, 1979), pp. 46–8 and plates 23–7; H. Evers, *Staat aus dem Stein* 2 (Munich, 1929), plate 7, Abb. 54 (Mentuhotep II); Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 103–4; G. Daressy, *CGC: Statues de divinités* (Cairo, 1905–6), p. 66 and plate 12; L. Borchardt, *CGC: Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo* 2 (Berlin, 1925), pp. 14–16 and 33–4, plates 65 and 70; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 172 (Sesostris I); Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 104–6; W.M.F. Petrie, *Abydos* 1 (London, 1902), p. 28 and plate 55 (Sesostris III).

[287] See e.g. Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 91 and 103–5; Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 233.

[288] C. Leblanc, 'Piliers et colosses de type "osiriaque" dans le contexte des temples de culte royal', *BIFAO* 80 (1980), pp. 69–89. See further sections 5.4.3 and 5.4.4.

[289] As noted in A. Gulyás, 'The Osirid Pillars and the Renewal of Ramesses III at Karnak', *SAK* 36 (2007), pp. 31–48, as well, there with specific reference to the statues in a single New Kingdom temple.

A look at a few of the texts on these statues will confirm that Leblanc's interpretation is correct. Thus, the inscriptions on a colossal red granite effigy of Sesostris I in 'Osiride' form discovered at Kom es-Sultan at Abydos give his titulary and describe him as 'beloved of Khentiamentiu', 'beloved of Osiris Khentiamentiu', and 'beloved of Osiris the great god, lord of Abydos'.[290] Elements of two large red granite 'Osiride' statues of Sesostris III were found at the same site.[291] The inscriptions on one of these describe him as 'beloved of Khentiamentiu', 'beloved of Osiris the great god, lord of Abydos' and 'beloved of Osiris Khentiamentiu lord of Abydos'.[292]

In this connection it is worth noting that seated statues of the king from his funerary temple at South Abydos call him 'beloved of Osiris Khentiamentiu lord of Abydos' as well,[293] an epithet which is also attributed to him on the stela of an official called Nebipusenwosret (BM EA 101).[294] The latter post-dates the king's death by at least a decade, and thus provides a contemporary emic perspective on the nature of the ruler's posthumous relationship with Osiris. Since some rulers were already called 'beloved of Osiris' or 'beloved of Osiris Khentiamentiu' during their lifetimes,[295] we can conclude that death did not affect their status vis-à-vis the god.

4.9.8. Summary of evidence

In all of these instances, a clear distinction is made between god and king. Thus the picture that emerges from the evidence we have just examined is the same as that which emerged from the Old Kingdom evidence. In the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom, both rulers and their subjects looked forward to interaction with Osiris, not identification with him. They hoped to be associated with him as *imakhu* and partake of the food, drink, and other necessities that he provided to those in his following. That both royalty and non-royalty employed the same sort of rituals to achieve these aims is shown by the fact that spells inscribed on the pyramidions of twelfth dynasty and later kings are also found in the Coffin Texts and in other non-royal sources of this time. In all of these respects, there is broad continuity between the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom, despite the political upheavals that intervened between them. Ritual spells constitute an important source of information on Egyptian ideas concerning the afterlife in both periods. But it is important to distinguish between

[290] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 103–4; Daressy, *CGC: Statues de divinités*, p. 66 and plate 12; Borchardt, *CGC: Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo* 2, pp. 33–4 and plate 70.

[291] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 104–6; Petrie, *Abydos* 1, p. 28 and plate 55.

[292] A. Mariette, *Abydos* 2 (Paris, 1880), plate 21.

[293] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 202 and 272; J. Wegner, *The Mortuary Temple of Senwosret III at Abydos* (New Haven and Philadelphia, 2007), pp. 188–91; Lehner, *The Complete Pyramids*, p. 178.

[294] See Wegner, *The Mortuary Temple of Senwosret III at Abydos*, pp. 191, 194, 199, and 396–7; Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember*, pp. 216–17.

[295] For examples, see ibid., pp. 124–6, 182–3, and 207.

what these say and what impact they were actually supposed to have in the next world. For the latter, paratextual, i.e. non-ritual, evidence is an indispensable guide.

4.10. THE LOCUTION *WS'IR (N)* NN IN THE COFFIN TEXTS AND OTHER FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD AND MIDDLE KINGDOM SOURCES

4.10.1. The locution *Wsi̯r (n)* NN in the Coffin Texts

This locution, which we encountered for the first time in the Pyramid Texts, continues to be used in the Coffin Texts as well. As noted in section 3.10, it originally denoted the deceased as a recipient of offerings in an offering ritual. But as the Old Kingdom progresses, we find it being used in a wider range of contexts to signal other aspects of the deceased's relationship with Osiris as well. This process continues in the Coffin Texts. Although there too, *Wsi̯r* NN can be employed in offering spells,[296] it is well on its way to becoming simply a marker of a deceased person's status as a member of Osiris's following and beneficiary of his favours in the afterlife.[297] The expansion of the range of contexts in which the deceased are called *Wsi̯r* NN in the Coffin Texts parallels to some extent the expansion of the range of boons that Osiris is asked to grant them in the wishes in contemporary offering formulas.[298]

In Coffin Text spells, as in those of the Pyramid Texts, *Wsi̯r* NN can vary with simple NN in contexts where it was not deemed necessary to provide an explicit marker of the deceased's affiliation with Osiris. Sometimes the version of a spell inscribed in one coffin will insert *Wsi̯r* before the owner's name while versions in other coffins omit it. Thus the version of Coffin Text Spell 36 inscribed on the outer coffin of Sepi from el-Bersha, now in the Louvre, refers to him as *Wsi̯r* NN, whereas other versions refer to the deceased as NN.[299] Two versions of Coffin Text Spell 2 employ *Wsi̯r* NN as a form of address while three others substitute NN.[300] The same sort of free variation is found in Spell 3,[301] Spell 4,[302] Spell 5,[303] and numerous others.

We also find variation between *Wsi̯r* NN and simple NN within a single version of a spell. Several versions of Coffin Text Spell 4 address the deceased as *Wsi̯r* NN in the opening invocation, but thereafter most of them employ NN as a form of address.[304] Likewise, several versions of Spell 9 alternate between *Wsi̯r* NN and simple NN when referring to the deceased.[305] These examples, taken at random from the opening pages

[296] H. Willems, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418)* (Leuven, 1996), p. 83.
[297] Cf. B. Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten* (Wiesbaden, 1975), p. 42.
[298] See section 4.9.2.
[299] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 135b. Sepi's version is designated as B1P in de Buck's edition.
[300] Ibid., p. 8d. [301] Ibid., p. 10a. [302] Ibid., pp. 11a and d, 14b.
[303] Ibid., p. 15a. [304] Compare ibid., pp. 1a and 14b. [305] Ibid., pp. 28c, 30c, 31c, and 32b.

of the initial volume of de Buck's edition of the Coffin Texts, will suffice to prove that in that corpus NN and *Wsi̯r* NN are simply two different ways of referring to the deceased, just as they are in the Pyramid Texts. The latter locution does not denote a composite or syncretism of Osiris and the deceased but rather the deceased himself, distinct from the god and therefore free to interact with him, as demonstrated by, e.g. Coffin Text Spell 36, where it is said that *Wsi̯r* NN has come before Osiris that he might see his beauty, worship him, serve him, dispel his injuries, and order (*smꜣᶜ*) his movements in his form as a divine spirit.[306]

4.10.2. The gender of NN in the locution *Wsi̯r (n)* NN

Coffin Text spells in which the deceased is addressed or referred to as *Wsi̯r* NN are attested for both men and women. Several examples are extant on the outer coffin of a woman named Djehutinakht from el-Bersha, now in Boston.[307] The process of adapting these spells for a woman was much more thorough and comprehensive than was the case with the Pyramid Text spells inscribed inside the pyramids of Old Kingdom queens.[308] Apart from a few slips,[309] feminine personal pronouns and demonstratives are regularly used in them when reference is made to the coffin owner.[310] At the beginning of Spell 1, for instance, she is invoked as *Wsi̯r* NN *tn*, using the feminine singular demonstrative, not *Wsi̯r* NN *pn*, and told directly afterward: *nṯṯ rw nṯṯ rw.ty*, 'You are the lion, you are the double lion', using the second person singular feminine independent pronoun.[311] Later on in the same spell, the vocative *Wsi̯r* NN *tn* is followed immediately by the injunction *ṯs ṯn ḥr iꜣb=ṯ i̯mi̯ ṯn ḥr wnm=ṯ*, 'Raise yourself on your left side, place yourself on your right side', using the second person singular feminine dependent and suffix pronouns.[312] At the beginning of Spell 10, the coffin owner is addressed as *Wsi̯r* NN *tn* and told *wḏᶜ n=ṯ sbꜣ i̯n Sšꜣ.t wp n=ṯ wꜣ.wt nfr.wt i̯n Wp-wꜣ.wt*, 'The door will be opened for you by Seshat. The beautiful roads will be opened for you by Wepwaut.'[313] Once again, feminine singular personal pronouns are employed.

The same is true of spells on other coffins inscribed for women, for example the outer coffin belonging to a woman called Sathedjhotep, also from el-Bersha, which is now in Cairo.[314] The version of Spell 19 on this coffin addresses her as *Wsi̯r* NN *tn* and proclaims immediately afterward: *i̯w=ṯ m nṯr wnn=ṯ m nṯr nn ḫfty.w=ṯ*, 'You are a god,

[306] See ibid., pp. 135–137a, discussed in section 3.10.1.

[307] See e.g. Spells 1, 4, 7–10, 12–16, 18–19 and 21 in de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, pp. 1–6, 11–14, 19–35, 38–50, 53–5, and 58–63, where this coffin is designated as B3B0.

[308] See section 3.10.3.

[309] See e.g. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, pp. 11e (*bᶜḥ=k*) and 62c (*n=k*).

[310] For instances where the original masculine pronouns have been left unchanged in other spells on this coffin, see ibid., pp. 137a–b, 138c–140g, 146c–e and 150a. Ibid., p. 145c, an original second person singular masculine dependent pronoun *ṯw* has been corrected to the corresponding feminine form *ṯn*.

[311] Ibid., p. 2a–b. [312] Ibid., p. 6b–c. [313] Ibid., pp. 33d–34a.

[314] This is designated as B4C ibid., p. xvii.

you will be a god. Your foes do not exist.'[315] Throughout the entire spell, feminine personal pronouns are used consistently to refer to the coffin owner. No masculine personal pronouns are employed.

The consistent use of feminine pronouns and demonstratives in conjunction with the locution *Wsỉr* NN in carefully adapted versions of these spells demonstrates unequivocally that from an ancient Egyptian perspective, the gender of *Wsỉr* NN was the same as that of simple NN. If NN was feminine, so was *Wsỉr* NN. This conclusion is supported by other evidence, for example, an inscription on an eleventh dynasty sarcophagus where an offering formula begins with the words *ḥtp dỉ nswt 'Inpw dỉ Gb n sꜣ.t=f Wsỉr* NN.[316] There the female beneficiary of the formula is identified as Geb's daughter *Wsỉr* NN, and in the ensuing text she is referred to with the third person singular feminine suffix pronoun.[317] It is further confirmed by archaeological evidence like the burial equipment deposited in the tombs of women in the Middle Kingdom. Even where the tomb owner was designated as *Wsỉr* NN, she was still interred with objects that would maintain her female social identity in the afterlife.[318]

This evidence is significant because it refutes the view expressed by some that prefixing *Wsỉr* to a woman's name caused her to become male.[319] Cooney claims that this transformation was necessary because only as a male could an Egyptian woman be reborn.[320] As a corollary to her idea, she interprets cases where deceased women are referred to with male personal pronouns in texts inscribed on coffins and other objects not as examples of imperfect adaptation or mechanical copying of texts originally composed with male beneficiaries in mind, but rather as a form of 'purposeful and powerful association with the male gender'.[321] Through identification with Osiris, the deceased woman became both male and female, and when male personal pronouns were used in reference to her, it was specifically her male aspect that was being evoked. As Cooney puts it, 'the masculine or feminine pronoun was chosen for particular sections of funerary texts, depending on the magical agenda'.[322] Similar views have been expressed by others.[323]

[315] Ibid., p. 55a–c.

[316] Lapp, *Typologie der Särge und Sargkammern von der 6. bis 13. Dynastie*, p. 225.

[317] Compare the similar offering formula introduction inserted near the end of Coffin Text Spell 48 (de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 214c–d). In versions of this utterance on coffins inscribed for males, *sꜣ=f*, 'his son', replaces *sꜣ.t=f*, and the beneficiary is referred to with masculine suffix pronouns.

[318] See the evidence collected in Grajetzki, *Tomb Treasures of the Late Middle Kingdom*.

[319] See e.g. K. Cooney, 'The Problem of Female Rebirth in New Kingdom Egypt: The Fragmentation of the Female Individual in her Funerary Equipment', in C. Graves-Brown (ed.), *Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt: 'Don your Wig for a Joyful Hour'* (Swansea, 2008), p. 4.

[320] Ibid., p. 6. [321] Ibid., pp. 10–13. [322] Ibid., p. 13.

[323] See e.g. H. McCarthy, 'Rules of Decorum and Expressions of Gender Fluidity in Tawosret's Tomb', in Graves-Brown (ed.), *Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 90–1 and 98; H. McCarthy, 'The Osiris Nefertari: A Case Study of Decorum, Gender, and Regeneration', *JARCE* 39 (2002), pp. 176 and 190–1; E. Bleiberg, 'The Coffin of Weretwahset/Bensuipet and "Scribal Errors" on Women's Funerary Equipment', *BES* 17 (2007), pp. 35–44; D. Kurth, *Materialien zum Totenglauben im römerzeitlichen Ägypten* (Hützel, 2010), pp. 28 note 155 and 160 note 1004.

In my opinion, there are several problems with this idea. One is that it is based on the premise that the ancient Egyptians actually aspired to become Osiris after they died. Much of this and the previous chapter have been devoted to proving that this premise is false. Moreover, it assumes that the locution *Wsi̯r* NN signified the deceased's identification with the male deity, and thus, in the case of women, their acquisition of his gender. On the contrary, *Wsi̯r* NN is actually a marker of association with Osiris as one of his followers, not identification. Since both men and women were eligible to join in his worship, gender difference was not a barrier for the latter. One did not need to be male to follow the god.[324] Another problem with this idea is that it relies upon a literal reading of Egyptian ritual texts for the hereafter, treating them as a menu or blueprint setting out what the Egyptians wanted to happen to them after they died, where every statement can be taken at face value. If a ritual text asserts that the deceased is a particular deity or will become that deity, then this is what the dead person hoped to be or do. As we saw in section 3.8, ritual texts cannot be read in this way.

Equally problematic is the idea that only as a male could an Egyptian woman be reborn in the afterlife. What is the evidence for this? No ancient Egyptian source makes such an assertion. In fact, the idea is refuted by Egyptian sources as early as the Pyramid Texts, not least the ending of Spell 561B which states that whoever truly worships Osiris and recites the appropriate words to him will live for ever.[325] That spell makes it clear that eternal life is not restricted to members of one gender.

Some texts for the afterlife intended for female beneficiaries do employ masculine personal pronouns to refer to them. However, the idea that this reflects the male gender that they acquired as a result of their identification with Osiris does not really withstand close scrutiny, especially when one takes into account a wider body of evidence than its proponents have considered. The same is true of the idea that when female personal pronouns are used to refer to a deceased woman in one part of a text and male pronouns in another, this is because the two parts have different magical agendas, one requiring her to be male and the other female.

In the spells inscribed inside the pyramids of sixth dynasty queens, for instance, masculine personal pronouns are normally used to refer to them. But this has nothing to do with a putative identification with Osiris, since such pronouns are used indifferently whether the queens are referred to as *Wsi̯r* NN or simply NN. Rather, the correct explanation is that the masculine pronouns in these texts were taken over mechanically from copies of Pyramid Text spells originally intended for kings.[326] Occasionally, these were altered to the more appropriate feminine ones. In an extract from Pyramid Text Spell 474 in the pyramid of Neith, for example, it is said of her: *pr=s i̯r p.t m-m sbꜣ.w m-m i̯ḫm.w-sk ꜣt=f tp=f šfšf.t=f i̯r gs=f ḥkꜣw=f i̯r rd.wy=f šm Nt pn i̯m=f ḫr mw.t=s Nw.t*, 'She will go forth to the sky among the stars, among those who know not destruction, his (*sic*) power upon him (*sic*), his (*sic*) awesomeness alongside him (*sic*), his (*sic*) magic at his

[324] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 7. [325] See section 3.9.1. [326] See section 3.10.3.

(*sic*) feet. This Neith will proceed thereby to her mother Nut.'[327] In this extract we have eight suffix pronouns referring to the queen. The first and last are feminine, the intervening six are masculine. By Cooney's logic, this must mean that the 'magical agenda' changes somewhere in the middle of the extract and then changes back again at the end, which in my view is improbable.

Consider also the version of Coffin Text Spell 4 inscribed on the aforementioned coffin of a woman called Djehutinakht from el-Bersha. In one clause she is told: *šsp=ṯ bʿḥ=k*, 'You will receive your abundance.'[328] The suffix pronoun attached to the first word is feminine, that attached to the second word is masculine. Does this signal a change of 'magical agenda' in between them? It is more likely that both here and in the extract from Neith's pyramid, an effort was made to convert masculine pronouns to the more appropriate feminine ones, but this was not carried through systematically.

Likewise, in the Book of the Dead manuscript written for Gatseshen, daughter of the twenty-first dynasty Theban high priest of Amun Menkheperre, we find alternation between feminine and masculine person pronouns in the titles of some spells. That of BD Spell 180, for instance, includes among the benefits that it will confer upon the deceased: *rdi.t n=s šm.wt=s swsḫ n=f wꜣ.wt=f*, 'granting her movements to her and widening his (*sic*) ways for him (*sic*)'.[329] Pronouns can even alternate within one of the constituent clauses of a title. Compare, for instance, that of Spell 15B which is supposed to benefit Gatseshen by *swsḫ nmt.t=s rdi.t n=f šm.w=f dr idn=f ḥr=s*, 'widening her strides, granting his (*sic*) movements to him (*sic*), and removing his (*sic*) deafness from her'.[330] Alternation of feminine and masculine personal pronouns within the same clause occurs in other texts preserved in this manuscript as well.[331] Here too, there can be no question of a change in 'magical agenda'.

Another problem with the theory advocated by Cooney and others is that it ignores those cases where masculine personal pronouns on coffins and other objects inscribed for female beneficiaries have actually been corrected into female ones. Examples occur in the Coffin Texts[332] and in sources from subsequent periods of Egyptian history as well, down to and including the Roman Period.[333] Even during the twenty-first dynasty, one of the periods when the practice of using masculine pronouns to denote the male aspect of deceased women was supposedly at its height, we find clear examples of such pronouns being corrected to the corresponding feminine ones on funerary objects belonging to high-status women.[334] If these masculine pronouns alluded to a

[327] G. Jéquier, *Les pyramides des reines Neit et Apouit* (Cairo, 1933), plate 8, line 18, and plate 7, line 19.
[328] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 11e.
[329] R. Lucarelli, *The Book of the Dead of Gatseshen: Ancient Egyptian Funerary Religion in the 10th Century BC* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 45 and 71.
[330] Ibid., pp. 46 and 70–1. [331] Ibid., pp. 177–9.
[332] See e.g. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 145c.
[333] See Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, pp. 9–10.
[334] See, for example, Lucarelli, *The Book of the Dead of Gatseshen*, p. 39, who also notes cases where original feminine pronouns have been corrected to masculine ones in papyri belonging to male relatives of these women, which may suggest the existence of master copies designed expressly for female beneficiaries which were subsequently adapted for male ones.

special gender-specific status possessed by the owners of the objects in question, the acquisition of which was essential for their rebirth in the afterlife, then why were they altered?

A useful perspective on this problem is provided by the texts and representations on the sarcophagus of Ankhnesneferibre, the daughter of king Psammetichus II of the twenty-sixth dynasty. This was later usurped by a man called Pamonthes, a member of a high-ranking Theban family.[335] The personal pronouns in the texts inscribed on the object were originally feminine, reflecting its first owner's gender in life, and she is depicted in female form on its lid.[336] Does this mean that she was denied rebirth in the hereafter? Pamonthes had the sarcophagus adapted for his own use by adding a short text referring to him in a horizontal band running around the edge of the chest. He also altered the vertical lines of inscriptions that comprised the original decoration of the chest by inserting his name in the cartouches that enclosed Ankhnesneferibre's and changing some of the feminine personal pronouns that referred to her to the corresponding masculine ones. However, these alterations were not carried through consistently, and there are numerous instances on every inscribed surface of the chest, both inside and out, where feminine suffix pronouns, dependent pronouns, and independent pronouns have been left in their original form.[337]

As a result, the gender of the pronouns used to refer to the sarcophagus owner varies frequently, not only within the same section of the text, but within consecutive clauses, and sometimes even within the same sentence as well. Compare, for instance, a lengthy passage on the inner-right surface of the chest which contains a series of thirty sentences identifying the deceased with various deities.[338] Each originally began with the third person singular feminine independent pronoun *nts*. Nineteen of these have been changed to the corresponding masculine pronoun *ntf*, and eleven have been left unaltered. There is no discernible pattern for this variation. One sentence, *nts Rʿ*, 'she is Re', occurs twice. In the first occurrence, *nts* has been changed to *ntf*. In the second, it has not. The same is true of another sentence, *nts ʾItm*, 'she is Atum'. A third sentence, this one on the foot end of the outside of the sarcophagus, originally read *ỉr.tw n=t ḥʿ.t n kꜣ=t*, 'A palace will be made for you for the benefit of your *ka*.'[339] The initial third person singular feminine suffix pronoun *t* has been left unaltered; the second has been changed to the corresponding masculine pronoun *k*.

One could cite further examples, but these should be sufficient to prove the point. In the inscriptions on the chest of the sarcophagus of Ankhnesneferibre, as in the other

[335] C. Sander-Hansen, *Die religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre* (Copenhagen, 1937); Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 39 note 154.

[336] Ibid., figure 12.

[337] Unfortunately, Sander-Hansen's publication does not indicate which personal pronouns have been altered and which have not. I am very grateful to Mareike Wagner, who will publish a new edition of the texts on Ankhnesneferibre's sarcophagus, for allowing me to consult her facsimiles of them in advance of her publication. On these, all changes in the gender of the pronouns are scrupulously recorded.

[338] This corresponds to lines 407–30 on pp. 126–30 of Sander-Hansen's publication.

[339] This corresponds to line 220 on p. 86 of Sander-Hansen's publication.

texts that we have looked at, one cannot argue that the use of one pronoun rather than another in a given passage or sentence has been dictated by a change in 'magical agenda'. Rather the pattern of variation is completely random. What is more, Pamonthes left all the original feminine personal pronouns on the inner and outer sides of the lid of the sarcophagus that he usurped unchanged. Nor did he make any alterations to the representation of Ankhnesneferibre in female form on that part of the object.[340] Should we conclude from this that he sought to claim a feminine aspect for himself in the afterlife? It is hardly likely, in my view.

The evidence presented above shows that those cases where an object inscribed for a woman employs masculine person pronouns rather than feminine ones to refer to her are not due to scribal errors or carelessness. They occur too frequently to be explained in this manner. But neither are they due to a desire to represent the woman as masculine. For the Egyptians, what was of paramount importance was to have one's name mentioned in or otherwise associated with a text for the afterlife. If the gender of the personal pronouns used in that text was the same as that of the beneficiary, so much the better, but this was not absolutely essential. In some cases, even the beneficiary's name could be omitted if the text could be linked with him or her by some other means.[341]

The vast majority of extant Egyptian texts for the afterlife are based on models originally drafted for men. Thus, when we find evidence of adaptation by means of modification of personal pronouns, it is normally masculine pronouns that have been changed to feminine ones rather than vice versa. Nevertheless, there are some texts where the adaptation has been the other way around, from feminine to masculine. In neither case, however, is there any reason to suppose that this has been done to mark a change in the text owner's gender.

The ideas advocated by Cooney and others are based on a relatively small sample of evidence, taken from a single place, Thebes, and dating to a relatively circumscribed period of time, the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period. Although they might seem plausible if one considers only that sample, when one evaluates them in the light of sources from many different parts of Egypt spanning virtually the entire length of Egyptian history, then their problematic nature emerges clearly. This demonstrates the importance of taking all the evidence into consideration when dealing with problems of ancient Egyptian religion and not simply a limited portion of it.

4.10.3. The locution *Wsi̯r (n)* NN in other sources of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom

During the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom, more references to the deceased as *Wsi̯r* NN occur in Coffin Text spells than in any other type of source. This is

[340] Sander-Hansen, *Die religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre*, pp. 4–5.
[341] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 654 note 20.

only to be expected, given the origin of the locution as a device to signal the dead person's affiliation with Osiris in ritual contexts. Nevertheless, examples of it do occur outside the Coffin Text corpus, mainly in contexts involving offerings. The distribution of these is markedly similar to that noted for such examples in private sources of the Old Kingdom in section 3.10.4. The deceased can be designated as *Wsỉr* NN in scenes depicting them as the intended recipients of items in lists of offerings, typically following the preposition *n*, 'to, for', in the phrase *n Wsỉr* NN.[342] This phrase indicates that the individual shown in the scene receives the items in question under the auspices of Osiris. Occasionally, the locution is used in other types of scene where offerings are presented to the deceased.[343] By contrast, *Wsỉr* is never written before the deceased's name when this is preceded by the epithet '*imakh* before Osiris', and only rarely when it occurs in the *ḥtp dỉ nswt* offering formula with Osiris as donor.[344]

This is why, as Fischer has noted, *Wsỉr* NN hardly ever occurs on Middle Kingdom stelae.[345] The offering formula with Osiris as donor is ubiquitous on these, which leaves little scope for the use of the locution. Fischer notes only three Middle Kingdom stelae out of the more than 700 published in the volumes of the Cairo Museum catalogue devoted to such objects where the deceased is called *Wsỉr* NN. On two of these, CG 20151 and 20249, the locution occurs in ritual utterances addressed directly to the dead person.[346] This is unsurprising, in view of its origin in ritual discourse. CG 20151 is also inscribed with a *ḥtp dỉ nswt* offering formula naming Osiris as one of the donors. As one would expect, this refers to the deceased as NN rather than *Wsỉr* NN.

The third stela identified by Fischer (CG 20516) contains an offering formula naming Osiris as one of the donors. There too, as expected, the deceased is called simply NN.[347] The formula is followed by an address to the living, which Fischer thinks contains a reference to the owner of the stela as *Wsỉr* NN. In fact, however, the owner requests those who pass by his stela to pray that Osiris might glorify him (*sꜣḫ Wsỉr* NN), just as in the stela of the twelfth dynasty priest Mentuhotep discussed in sections 4.9.3

[342] See H. Fischer, 'A Stela of the Herakleopolitan Period at Saqqara: The Osiris *'Iti*', *ZÄS* 90 (1963), pp. 35–7.

[343] See, for example, A. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir* 2 (London, 1915), plate 12; A. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir* 3 (London, 1915), plates 4 and 13.

[344] For some examples, see Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, pp. 328 (CG 20701) and 394 (CG 20761); W.K. Simpson, *Inscribed Material from the Pennsylvania-Yale Excavations at Abydos* (New Haven and Philadelphia, 1995), pp. 33–6 and plate 5B (Cairo JdE 91253). I am grateful to Zsuzsanna Végh for drawing the last example to my attention. There, it is possible that the donor is Ptah-Sokar-Osiris rather than Osiris. Furthermore, the offering formula lists multiple beneficiaries, some of whom may still have been alive when it was inscribed. If so, the locution *Wsỉr* NN may have been used to distinguish the dead from the living.

[345] Fischer, *ZÄS* 90 (1963), p. 38.

[346] H. Lange and H. Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 1 (Berlin, 1902), pp. 178–9 and 270; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 4, plate 19.

[347] Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, pp. 108–9.

and 4.11.2. *Wsi̯r* is the subject in this sentence and NN the object, so there is no reference to the deceased as *Wsi̯r* NN.

Two other stela confirm the picture presented by these three. The first is CG 20232, overlooked by Fischer in his tabulation of stelae in the Cairo Museum catalogue where the deceased are called *Wsi̯r* NN.[348] This preserves a ritual text designed to open the sight of the beneficiary and allow him to see the lord of the horizon and travel in the sky. It refers to him as *Wsi̯r* NN. Elsewhere on the stela, the deceased is called simply NN. The second stela is now in the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, where it has the registration number Inv. 643 [2433].[349] The inscription on this object begins with an offering formula which names Osiris as one of the donors. At the end of this, as one would expect, the stela owner is called simply NN. The offering formula is followed by a ritual utterance, part of which is based on the Abydos Formula, addressed directly to the stela owner. There he is called *Wsi̯r* NN. At the end of the entire inscription, his name is mentioned again, this time followed by the epithet 'justified before Osiris'. Here too, as one would expect since the epithet already links him with the god, his name is not preceded by *Wsi̯r*.

The texts inscribed on stelae and other objects of Middle Kingdom date deposited in the sanctuary of Heqaib at Elephantine are of particular interest in this connection, since they sometimes combine ritual utterances addressed to or spoken by the deceased with offering formulas where Osiris is named as a donor, and it is interesting to observe the pattern of distribution of *Wsi̯r* NN and simple NN in these. Unsurprisingly, this turns out to be the same as on the objects already discussed. Thus, two statues of a man called Heqaibankh are inscribed with a ritual utterance addressed to him, which is paralleled on the pyramidion of Amenemhet III and in other sources. There he is called *Wsi̯r* NN. But in the offering formulas with Osiris as donor that follow he is simply NN.[350] The shrine of a man called Iatu preserves a spell in which the owner addresses Atum and identifies himself as *Wsi̯r* NN. This resembles Coffin Text Spells 222 and 223 and appears to be a precursor of the later Spell 56 of the Book of the Dead. But in the offering formula that follows this he is simply NN, as one would expect.[351]

Finally, the shrine of Sarenput I is inscribed with an excerpt from Pyramid Text Spell 213, in which he is called *Wsi̯r* NN. But in the offering formulas on the shrine, with one exception, he is called simply NN.[352] The exception is a formula in which Anubis and Osiris are asked to provide various items, including 'all the divine offerings of all the gods of the house of Osiris for the lector priests, the sole companions, and the *imakh* of

[348] Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 1, pp. 252–3; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 4, plate 18; T. Handoussa, 'Stela and Offering Table of *Mi̯kt*', in P. Posener-Kriéger (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar* 1 (Cairo, 1985), pp. 373–8 (reference courtesy of Zsuzsanna Végh). Fischer also overlooks the two examples from the Cairo catalogue cited in note 344.

[349] See K. Kitchen, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection in the National Museum, Rio de Janeiro* (Warminster, 1988), pp. 55–61 and plates 37–8.

[350] L. Habachi, *Elephantine IV: The Sanctuary of Heqaib* (Mainz am Rhein, 1985), pp. 53–4.

[351] Ibid., p. 62.

[352] Ibid., pp. 25–6.

Osiris, NN'. The fact that Sarenput is called *imakh* of Osiris here is perhaps to be explained by the fact that his own name is separated from the offering formula itself by an intervening reference to other beneficiaries.[353]

A pattern of distribution very similar to that just observed in stela, statue, and shrine texts is found in the inscriptions on sarcophagi of this period. In horizontal bands of text inside these, the deceased can be referred to as *Wsi̯r* NN in the introductions to speeches addressed to them by divinities and in the speeches themselves, although this is not obligatory.[354] Where vertical bands of text call the deceased '*imakh* before Osiris', however, the locution *Wsi̯r* NN is not employed.[355] The reason for this is that the addition of *Wsi̯r* would be superfluous if used in conjunction with the epithet '*imakh* before Osiris', as it would be in the *ḥtp di̯ nswt* offering formula with Osiris as donor, since both signal the deceased's relationship with that god in terms that are more or less synonymous with those expressed by the locution *Wsi̯r* NN.

An unusual offering formula preserved on some sarcophagi begins with the words *ḥtp di̯ nswt Gb n sꜣ=f* (variant: *sꜣ.t=f*) *Wsi̯r* NN, 'An offering which the king gives and Geb gives to his son (variant: daughter) Osiris of NN'.[356] The use of the locution in this context is unexpected, but then so is the position of the phrase identifying the beneficiary of what is requested, which normally follows rather than precedes the enumeration of the desired boons. In fact, all attested examples of this offering formula name the beneficiary in the expected position at the end as well, there designating them simply as NN, as one would expect. Perhaps there has been some influence from a ritual source like Coffin Text Spell 48, where the words *ḥtp di̯ nswt Gb n sꜣ=f Wsi̯r* NN occur in a different context.[357] Whatever the case, these examples do not violate the general pattern of distribution we have observed, since even though they involve a *ḥtp di̯ nswt* formula, Osiris is not named among the donors.[358]

4.10.4. Unusual orthographies of the locution *Wsi̯r (n)* NN in the Coffin Texts

4.10.4.1. Orthographies of the element Wsi̯r that incorporate a t

The texts inscribed on coffins of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom provide some interesting orthographies of the initial element of the locution *Wsi̯r* NN. One such occurs twice on the inner coffin inscribed for a man called Nefer,

[353] For another offering formula on the same shrine with multiple beneficiaries, see ibid., p. 26.
[354] See e.g. Lapp, *Typologie der Särge und Sargkammern von der 6. bis 13. Dynastie*, pp. 73 and 225–6.
[355] Ibid., p. 123. [356] Ibid., pp. 73 and 225.
[357] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 214c–d.
[358] Compare Stela CG 20518, where the deceased is called *imakh* before Osiris in a *ḥtp di̯ nswt* offering formula with Anubis and Wepwaut as donors (Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, p. 113; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 4, plate 35).

originally from el-Bersha and now in the Cairo Museum.[359] In this orthography, what looks like the flesh sign (Gardiner Sign-List F51) is followed by a *t* and the seated god determinative (Gardiner Sign-List A40).[360] The combination of the first two signs is attested in writings of the name of Isis on this and some other coffins, where it is normally followed by the seated woman (Gardiner Sign-List B1).[361] Perhaps this alternative orthography of *Wsi̯r*, if not an error,[362] provides a clue to the pronunciation or the etymology of the god's name.[363] Elsewhere in the texts inscribed on Nefer's coffin, *Wsi̯r* is written in a more traditional manner, without the *t*.[364]

A similar orthography of the name of Osiris himself appears in the version of Coffin Text Spell 215 inscribed on the inner coffin of a man called Mesehet, originally from Siut and now in the Cairo Museum.[365] In this case, one might think that perhaps there has been confusion with the name of Isis, whose name actually replaces that of Osiris here in some versions of Spell 215.[366] Another version of the spell inscribed on the inner coffin of Sathedjhotep, whose outer coffin has already been cited in section 4.10.2, substitutes an orthography of the name of Osiris comprising the eye and throne signs normally used to write *Wsi̯r* followed by a *t* and the seated woman determinative in this passage.[367] Here too, one might think of confusion with the name of Isis. However, the same orthography is used again in an earlier passage in this spell where only Osiris can be meant.[368]

4.10.4.2. The element Wsi̯r with a sun disk determinative

Another interesting orthography occurs in the version of Coffin Text Spell 45 inscribed on the inner coffin of Iha from el-Bersha, now in the Cairo Museum.[369] This has the eye sign, the throne sign, and a seated god determinative, like many other writings of *Wsi̯r*, but in addition there is a sun disk between the throne sign and the determinative.[370] The sun disk is often found in writings of the name of Osiris in later periods of Egyptian history,[371] but it is unusual to find it as early as the Coffin Texts. Altenmüller

[359] For this object, see J. Allen, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 8 (Chicago, 2006), p. ix (CG 28087).

[360] See ibid., pp. 449b and 452b. According to J. Allen, 'The Name of Osiris (and Isis)', *Lingua Aegyptia* 21 (2013), p. 11, the initial sign actually represents a testicle rather than a piece of flesh, to which he attributes the phonetic value *is*.

[361] See A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*[3] (Oxford, 1957), p. 467; R. van der Molen, *A Hieroglyphic Dictionary of Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2000), p. 101; Allen, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 8, p. 451b.

[362] Conceivably, the *t* may have been written for *r*. Cf. the divine names written *ỉsr.t*/*ỉsr.t* and *ỉsr*/*ỉsr*, both with seated woman determinative, elsewhere on the same coffin (ibid., p. 451a).

[363] See section 3.4.2.

[364] See e.g. Allen, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 8, pp. 448a, f and k, 450b and q, and 451l.

[365] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. x (CG 28118).

[366] Ibid., p. 183b.

[367] See reference cited in the preceding note.

[368] Ibid., p. 181a.

[369] For this object, see de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. xvii (CG 28089).

[370] Ibid., p. 192e (B12C).

[371] See e.g. T. DuQuesne, 'The Osiris-Re Conjunction with Particular Reference to the Book of the Dead', in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, pp. 31–2; W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen, 1954), p. 100.

has suggested that the use of it in this particular writing of the locution *Wsi̯r* NN may have been influenced by the fact that the words of Spell 45 say the deceased appears as Re and will be given life in the west like that god every day.[372] If this is the case, however, one wonders why the sun disk is omitted in writings of *Wsi̯r* elsewhere in that version of the spell, especially in the first of the two sentences singled out by her, where *Wsi̯r* NN is actually said to appear as the solar deity. Perhaps its presence in the clause where it does occur is due to confusion with the name of Re, written with sun disk and seated god determinative, which occurs near the end of the clause immediately beforehand.

4.10.4.3. Wsi̯r n NN

A particularly interesting writing of the locution *Wsi̯r* NN occurs in the version of Coffin Text Spell 399 inscribed on the coffin of a man called Iqer found at Gebelein, which is now in Turin.[373] In this instance what is of interest is not the writing of the initial element *Wsi̯r*, but the fact that there is something inserted between it and the name of the deceased: the genitival adjective *n*. Thus *Wsi̯r n* NN, 'Osiris of NN', is clearly written and not simply *Wsi̯r* NN.[374] This is the earliest example known to me in which the genitival *n* is inserted between the elements of this locution, a phenomenon which becomes increasingly common from the twenty-first dynasty onward. What is of especial interest is that the parallel version of this spell inscribed on the coffin of Heqata from Aswan, now in the Cairo Museum, substitutes *Wsi̯r* NN for *Wsi̯r n* NN. This not only confirms that the *n* after *Wsi̯r* in the version on Iqer's coffin is genitival and not a preposition, since no such preposition occurs in the corresponding place in the parallel; it also shows that *Wsi̯r* NN and *Wsi̯r n* NN are simply variants of each other, and must mean the same thing.

How can this be? In Egyptian, the only way that Noun A + Noun B can mean the same thing as Noun A + genitival *n* + Noun B is if the former is a direct genitival construction, having the same sense as its longer counterpart but without any overt marker of the word for 'of'. Thus *Wsi̯r* NN must be a direct genitival construction meaning 'Osiris of NN', just as *Wsi̯r n* NN does, and should be translated as such wherever it occurs. In other words, the Pyramid Texts and all subsequent Egyptian texts for the afterlife refer to the deceased as 'Osiris of NN' not 'Osiris NN', as is commonly assumed.[375] There is a mass of other evidence that supports this conclusion; in particular, the numerous additional examples from different periods of Egyptian

[372] Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten*, p. 44, citing de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, pp. 191g–192a and 192d. E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, 1982), p. 93, wrongly states that it is the god Osiris who is said to appear as Re here.

[373] For this object, see de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5, p. x. The spell in question is discussed in Willems, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418)*, pp. 139–40 (there designated 399A).

[374] See de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5, p. 165c. I am grateful to Harold Hays for pointing out this example to me.

[375] Cf. section 3.10.

history in which *Wsir* NN and *Wsir n* NN are used interchangeably with each other. A fuller treatment of these is reserved for section 6.6, where all the relevant evidence will be assembled and presented. Here it is sufficient to document the fact that the form of the locution with the genitival *n* actually written out occurs as early as the Coffin Texts.[376]

4.11. ACCESS TO COFFIN TEXT SPELLS AND THEIR BENEFITS IN THE FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD AND MIDDLE KINGDOM

4.11.1. Access vs. ownership

How far down the social scale did access to spells like those in the Coffin Texts extend during the period now under consideration? Willems maintains that this was restricted to a tiny minority of individuals who could afford a coffin elaborately decorated and inscribed with lengthy texts for the afterlife.[377] According to him, ownership of such an object would have been the equivalent of owning a Rolls Royce today.[378] However, this view assumes that the only means of access to the benefits that the Coffin Text spells conferred was through possession of a decorated and inscribed coffin, ignoring the possibility that some, perhaps many, may have possessed copies of the spells written on less expensive media such as rolls of papyrus. The fact that only a few can afford to own a Rolls Royce today does not mean that all others are excluded from having cars, since cheaper alternatives are available as well. Extending Willems's analogy, perhaps the papyrus roll was the equivalent of a Ford Fiesta or an Austin Mini. Such rolls need not have been lengthy or elaborate, but could have contained only a selection of spells or else presented them in summary or abbreviated versions, without in any way compromising their efficacy.[379]

One should also remember that access and ownership are two different things. Even some who were unable to afford their own scroll may have been able to arrange for a priest or someone with the requisite ritual expertise to recite spells like those used in the Coffin Texts for them using an archival manuscript or their own personal copy, which would then be returned to wherever it was kept until the next time it was needed.[380] Perhaps the ability to read, rather than any specific ritual expertise, would have been sufficient for a person to recite the spells with the desired efficacy. It is also possible that

[376] Contra Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 167, who says that *Wsir n* NN is not attested until the twenty-first dynasty.

[377] Willems, *Les Textes des Sarcophages et la démocratie*, pp. 171–2; Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, pp. 140–65.

[378] Ibid., p. 165; Williams, *Les Textes des Sarcophages et la démocratie*, pp. 171–2.

[379] See Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, pp. 13 and 16–17.

[380] See Smith in Quack (ed.), *Ägyptische Rituale der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, pp. 149–51.

spells may have been learned and transmitted orally, in which case even the illiterate could have served as ritualists.[381] As one archaeologist has noted, 'When considering burial customs we always have to accept that the tangible remains are not the whole story, even in those rare cases where the burial is found intact. The preparation of the body, the procession to the tomb, words spoken, rites carried out at the entrance or inside the burial chamber: all these activities leave little or no trace and yet may have been considered essential in ensuring safe passage through death to the afterlife.'[382]

4.11.2. Evidence for access to spells for the afterlife among those who were not owners of coffins inscribed with Coffin Texts

All this might sound somewhat speculative, and in fact Willems has characterized an earlier version of the argument presented in section 4.11.1 as precisely that.[383] Nevertheless, there is solid evidence to support the view that spells like those in the Coffin Texts were accessible to a wider spectrum of Egyptian society than he has allowed. First, we know that such spells were not only written on expensive coffins. They were inscribed on papyrus rolls and other smaller items of burial equipment as well, so the use of more affordable media as a means of preserving and transmitting Coffin Text spells is a well-documented fact.[384] Second, the wishes in offering formulas on private stelae and other objects provide an accurate record of the afterlife aspirations of a number of individuals who did not possess elaborately decorated and inscribed coffins, and it is clear that these were fundamentally the same as those of wealthier people who could afford such objects for their burials.[385]

Third, it is evident from the wishes preserved on these stelae and other objects that their owners hoped to fulfil their aspirations for the hereafter with the help of glorification spells, even if they did not own copies of these themselves. Various strategies for achieving this end were adopted. Those who could afford to might pay to have the spells recited. This was the course adopted by a man called Antef who lived in the reign of Mentuhotep II.[386] The stelae of the priests Mentuhotep and Inyotef, on the other hand, request the living to pray that Osiris might glorify them.[387] The inscription on the side piece of a false door belonging to a woman called Ipiemsaes,

[381] See section 4.5.4.

[382] J. Bourriau, 'Patterns of Change in Burial Customs during the Middle Kingdom', in S. Quirke (ed.), *Middle Kingdom Studies* (New Malden, 1991), p. 4.

[383] Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, pp. 213–19.

[384] See Heerma van Voss in Helck and Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5, p. 468.

[385] See the detailed comparison of offering formula wishes with Coffin Text spell titles and colophons in sections 4.9.1 and 4.9.2.

[386] See Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember*, pp. 36 and 38.

[387] Petrie, *Tombs of the Courtiers and Oxyrhynkhos*, pp. 10 and 19, plates 22–3; Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember*, pp. 102–3; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, p. 109. Cf. sections 4.9.3 and 4.10.3.

found at Saqqara and dating to the First Intermediate Period, does the same.[388] Presumably what is desired here is for the god to ensure that others recite the requisite spells. This interpretation is supported by the fact that a common boon requested from Osiris in offering formulas of this time is transfiguration through the recitation of glorification spells.[389] It is significant that this request is for recitation of the spells (*šd.t sꜣḫ.w*), not the provision of inscribed copies of them on a coffin: access to the spells and the benefits they confer is the desired objective, not ownership.

Fourth, some versions of the request for glorifications specify that the spells in question be recited by a lector priest, but this is not invariably the case.[390] If only lector priests could recite them, then why bother to specify them as the desired recitants? We are reminded by this of the fact that in ancient Egypt anyone who could master the words of a spell would have been in a position to use it. There was no belief that only a select group of duly authorized individuals were empowered to speak efficaciously in ritual contexts.[391] It is entirely possible, therefore, that spells were read out for the benefit of those who did not possess copies of them by relatives or others who were not themselves members of the clergy.

Fifth, there is indisputable evidence that some Coffin Text spells did circulate orally. Probably the best known example is Spell 836.[392] This, or at least some of its constituent material, was used by the living as well as by the dead. In the Middle Kingdom literary work known as the Tale of the Herdsman, the title character recites a portion of it to ensure that he and his cattle can cross a body of water safely.[393] Evidently he does this from memory, since the text makes no reference to any written document. Likewise, scenes in some Old Kingdom tombs depict herdsmen reciting apotropaic spells to protect their cattle when they have to cross bodies of water infested with crocodiles.[394] Here too, it is clear that they have memorized the utterances, since there are no written copies of them in their hands.[395] If a herdsman could recite a Coffin Text spell from memory, how many others must have been capable of doing the same thing?

Finally, there is evidence which unequivocally disproves Willems's view that only those who possessed coffins inscribed with spells for the afterlife could hope to enjoy the benefits these were supposed to confer. One has only to consider the kings of the twelfth dynasty, who possessed neither tombs nor coffins inscribed with the requisite

[388] K. Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 28–9 and plate 12.

[389] See e.g. Lapp, *Typologie der Särge und Sargkammern von der 6. bis 13. Dynastie*, Bl. 1, 19, and 26.

[390] For versions that do specify the desired recitant, see ibid., Bl. 1 and 26.

[391] See section 4.5.4.

[392] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 36.

[393] For this text, see J. Darnell, 'A Midsummer Night's Succubus—The Herdsman's Encounters in P. Berlin 3024, the Pleasures of Fishing and Fowling, the Songs of the Drinking Place, and the Ancient Egyptian Love Poetry', in S. Melville and A. Slotsky (eds), *Opening the Tablet Box: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Benjamin R. Foster* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), pp. 99–118, especially pp. 109–13, with extensive bibliography. The portion of the spell recited by the herdsman corresponds to de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 36m–q.

[394] See Darnell in Melville and Slotsky (eds), *Opening the Tablet Box*, p. 113.

[395] See, for example, H. Wild, *Le tombeau de Ti* 2 (Cairo, 1953), plates 113 and 124.

utterances. By Willems's logic, they must have been denied any hope of benefiting from these. Yet we know from other sources, e.g. the inscriptions on royal pyramidia and offering tables, that they were not. As these show, they had the same expectations for the hereafter as those who were buried in coffins covered with Coffin Text spells. This emphasizes once again the importance of distinguishing between access and display. If texts of a particular category are not displayed in a tomb, this does not constitute proof that the tomb owner had no access to them or no hope of enjoying their benefits in the afterlife.

Willems himself has taken note of the fact that the rulers of the twelfth dynasty did not possess coffins inscribed with spells for the afterlife, but he assumes that they benefited from their recitation nevertheless. He proposes that the utterances 'may only have been deployed in ritual performances',[396] which is precisely what I have suggested with respect to non-royalty. It is striking that in the case of kings he accepts the idea that texts preserving such spells existed and were used, even though no direct evidence for them survives, but rejects it where non-royal individuals are concerned. In my view, this is a major inconsistency in his argument.

4.11.3. The importance of looking at all the evidence

An even more serious problem with Willems's approach, it seems to me, is that he relies almost exclusively upon inscribed coffins as a means of trying to chart the diffusion of spells for the afterlife and the benefits derived from them in the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom. This is far too narrow a base of evidence to employ for such a purpose. Coffins inscribed with Coffin Text spells are an obvious starting point, but to their evidence must be added that of a mass of other inscribed objects, for example, stelae, offering tables, false doors, and coffins with less elaborate decoration, many of which were made for people who were not the ancient Egyptian equivalents of Rolls Royce owners. In the present chapter, the full range of written evidence has been deployed, and it will be apparent that the result is a very different picture to the one that emerges when only a partial sample of it is analysed.

Willems comments that 'Coffins inscribed with Coffin Texts do not represent the proverbial tip of an iceberg, which hides vast quantities of cheaper varieties on papyrus (and pottery).'[397] Here we are in full agreement. Only a small part of an iceberg is visible to the observer. The rest is concealed from view. Although coffins inscribed with Coffin Texts constitute only a part of the evidence that can be deployed to study the diffusion of spells for the afterlife during the period that concerns us now, the rest of this evidence is not concealed or hidden away. Rather, thanks to the publications of earlier scholars, it lies in plain sight. All one need do is look for it in the right places.

[396] Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 174 note 167. Cf. ibid., pp. 182 note 189, and 226 note 334.
[397] Ibid., p. 219.

4.12. OSIRIS AND THE DECEASED AT ABYDOS

4.12.1. Osiris at Abydos in the Old Kingdom

The city of Abydos is mentioned a total of nine times in six different Pyramid Text spells: 437 (twice), 483, 509, 532, 610 (twice), and 1006 (twice).[398] Spell 610 is a variant of Spell 437. None of these spells is attested earlier than the pyramid of Pepi I. By way of comparison, other cities, for example, Heliopolis, Hierakonpolis, and Pe, are already mentioned in the pyramids of Unis and Teti, and their names recur with greater frequency in the rest of the corpus.[399] In Pyramid Text Spells 437, 483, 532, 610, and 1006, reference is made to 'the one who stands and does not tire who dwells in Abydos', an epithet designating Osiris. This shows that there was already a connection between that god and Abydos in the reign of Pepi I.

'The Great Land', the eighth or Thinite nome of which Abydos was the pre-eminent religious centre, is mentioned a total of nine times in nine different Pyramid Text spells: 366, 422, 437, 459, 463, 601, 610, 659, and 1004.[400] Two of these (437 and 610) mention Abydos as well. With the exception of Spell 366, which is found in the pyramid of Teti, no spell mentioning the Thinite nome is attested before the reign of Pepi I. Some of these spells link Osiris specifically with that district. Pyramid Text Spell 601, for example, an ancestor of the later Second Letter for Breathing,[401] requests the Ennead to cause the deceased king's name, pyramid, and construction to flourish as the names of various deities flourish in the localities where they were especially venerated. In the case of Osiris, this is said to be the Thinite nome.

The earliest evidence for the association of Osiris with Abydos in non-royal sources dates to the sixth dynasty, and thus is contemporary with the earliest royal evidence for that link. In private offering formulas of this time he is sometimes referred to as 'lord of Abydos'.[402] Non-royal evidence for the association of Osiris with the Thinite nome is even earlier. Some offering formulas of the fifth dynasty,

[398] See Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, pp. 436 (§794d) and 439 (§798c); Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 68 (§1012d), 128 (§1122d), 213 (§1261a), 404 (§1711d), and 406 (1716b); Pierre-Croisiau, *Les textes de la pyramide de Pépy 1er*, volume 2, plate 2B, lines 92 and 94.

[399] See R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford, 1969), Index, pp. 325–6, under the relevant entries.

[400] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, pp. 338 (§627b), 413 (§754c), 439 (§798b), 484 (§867a), and 490 (§877b); Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 380 (§1665a), 405 (§1716a), and 455 (§1867a); Pierre-Croisiau, *Les textes de la pyramide de Pépy 1er*, volume 2, plate 2B, line 52.

[401] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 516.

[402] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 25; E. Brovarski, 'Abydos in the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period, Part I', in C. Berger, G. Clerc, and N. Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant* 1 (Cairo, 1994), p. 111; B. Begelsbacher-Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches im Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV. und V. Dynastie* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1981), pp. 121–2 and 124–5; L. Borchardt, *CGC: Denkmäler des Alten Reiches (ausser den Statuen) im Museum von Kairo* 1 (Berlin, 1937), p. 212 (no. 1507); J. Richards, 'Kingship and Legitimation', in W. Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology* (Chichester and Malden, 2010), p. 78.

for instance, already refer to Osiris as 'lord of the Great Land', before he is linked with the nome in royal sources.[403]

It should be noted that Griffiths rather inflates the number of times Abydos is mentioned in the Pyramid Texts by including in this figure references to Nedit, the place where Osiris was murdered according to some Egyptian sources. He does so on the assumption that this was somewhere near Abydos.[404] In reality, however, Nedit is to be located in the vicinity of Busiris.[405] Therefore references to Osiris in conjunction with that place in the Pyramid Texts have to be seen as evidence for his association with Busiris, not Abydos. When one takes this into consideration, it emerges that there is no real basis for the frequently repeated claim that the god is associated primarily with Abydos in royal sources of this time, as opposed to non-royal ones where he is associated chiefly with Busiris.[406]

Apart from the references to Osiris in the private offering formulas cited previously, some of which are inscribed on monuments that actually originate from Abydos, there is little evidence for the presence of an actual cult of Osiris there during the Old Kingdom. This is not because the city was neglected. The kings of the fifth dynasty took an active interest in Abydos.[407] So did the kings of the sixth dynasty, but the chief objects of their benefactions were the temple of Khentiamentiu, who was still the pre-eminent local deity, and the *ka*-mansions that they established for their own personal cults.[408]

There may be some indirect evidence for the performance of cultic activities for Osiris at Abydos during the Old Kingdom, but the interpretation of this is problematic. Brovarski has drawn attention to a stela of sixth dynasty date from

[403] For examples, see Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 15; Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis*, p. 177; Brovarski in Berger, Clerc, and Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant* 1, p. 108 note 59; Begelsbacher-Fischer, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches im Spiegel der Privatgräber der IV. und V. Dynastie*, pp. 121–2 and 125; Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, p. 34 note 39 (there misread as *nb ỉbḏw*).

[404] See J.G. Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult* (Leiden, 1980), p. 22, followed by Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 18–19, and Pouls Wegner, *The Cult of Osiris at Abydos*, pp. 60–1.

[405] See J. Yoyotte, *Histoire, géographie et religion de l'Égypte ancienne* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2013), p. 390; F.-R. Herbin, *Le livre de parcourir l'éternité* (Leuven, 1994), p. 182. The latter draws attention to the practice of juxtaposing references to Busirite localities with references to Abydene ones in Egyptian texts, which misled Griffiths into thinking Nedit was in the region of Abydos. Since the mysteries performed there re-enacted the events that followed the murder of Osiris, some descriptions of them do mention Nedit as a place where a part of the action unfolds. See e.g. Sethe, *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht*, p. 71, line 18. Thus, in the context of the ritual, Nedit could be transposed to an Abydene setting, but this does not alter the fact that its real location was near Busiris.

[406] e.g. J.G. Griffiths, 'Osiris', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 4 (Wiesbaden, 1982), p. 626; Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 120.

[407] Brovarski in Berger, Clerc, and Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant* 1, p. 99.

[408] E. Brovarski, 'Abydos in the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period, Part II', in D. Silverman (ed.), *For his Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer* (Chicago, 1994), pp. 15–18; Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 38–40; Pouls Wegner, *The Cult of Osiris at Abydos*, pp. 64–6; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 80–2. Richards in Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology*, pp. 74–8, claims that Osiris had already replaced Khentiamentiu as the chief god of Abydos by the sixth dynasty, but this view is based on the rather ambiguously presented evidence of only two Abydene tombs, those of the vizier Iuu and his son Weni, which is open to other interpretations.

that site which mentions a woman called *Nšm.t-m-ḥ.t*. This name means 'The *neshmet*-bark is at the front'.[409] Since the bark in question is well attested later as the vessel of Osiris and, as such, plays an important role in the festal procession conducted for him during the celebration of his mysteries at Abydos, perhaps this name shows that the rites were already being performed in the Old Kingdom. But it may be that the *neshmet*-bark was originally used in the cult of a different deity and not appropriated by Osiris until later.[410] Another stela of the sixth dynasty, also from Abydos, was inscribed for a man who bears the title *ỉmy-r šms ḥb Wp-wꜣ.wt*, 'overseer of the retinue of the festival of Wepwaut'.[411] In the Middle Kingdom, Wepwaut is known to have played an important part in the mysteries of Osiris, leading the way during the god's procession. Conceivably this title could relate to that event, but it is equally possible that it refers to a rite performed for another divinity like Khentiamentiu, or even Wepwaut himself. Neither of these examples, therefore, offers conclusive proof that the Abydene mysteries of Osiris were already being celebrated in the Old Kingdom.

Griffiths has cited a passage in Pyramid Text Spell 422 which he thinks refers to the procession of Osiris at Abydos.[412] In this spell the beneficiary is told: 'The god's followers are behind you, the god's privileged ones before you, reciting "The god has come, the god has come. This NN has come on Osiris's throne. This *akh* who is in Nedit has come, the power who is in the Great Land." Isis will speak to you, Nephthys will call to you. The *akhs* will come to you in obeisance, kissing the earth at your feet through dread of you, O NN, in the towns of perception.'[413]

According to Griffiths, this passage evokes the festive scene in which the devotees of Osiris surround the vessel containing his image and accompany it as it conveys him along the processional way. But although the passage certainly describes a joyous reception of the deceased king, there is nothing to indicate that this is supposed to take place in Abydos. Of the toponyms mentioned in the passage, only one, the Great Land, can be connected with that city, and this is not specifically named as the venue of the events described. Nedit, as we have already seen, was near Busiris rather than Abydos, and the location of the towns of perception is unknown. Morales has suggested that the original setting of some other Pyramid Text spells may have been the rites celebrated for Osiris at Abydos, but it is difficult to test this hypothesis given the evidence available at present.[414]

[409] Brovarski in Berger, Clerc, and Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant* 1, pp. 111–12.

[410] It is worth noting that H. Frankfort, 'The Cemeteries of Abydos: Work of the Season 1925–26', *JEA* 14 (1928), p. 235, draws attention to some stylistic features in the decoration of this stela which could point to a post-Old Kingdom date. Dina Faltings has actually proposed dating it to the First Intermediate Period (personal communication from Zsuzsanna Végh). If this later dating is correct, then a personal name incorporating that of the sacred bark of Osiris would be unexceptionable.

[411] Brovarski in Berger, Clerc, and Grimal (eds), *Hommages à Jean Leclant* 1, pp. 110–11 and 120.

[412] See Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris and his Cult*, p. 78.

[413] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, pp. 413–14 (§754a–755c).

[414] See Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, p. 526 note 1513.

Neither royal nor non-royal sources of the Old Kingdom mention any of the characteristic landmarks or topographical features of the region around Abydos that were associated with the rites of Osiris, unless a reference to a *ỉn.t ʿ3.t*, 'great valley', in Pyramid Text Spell 459 refers to what later became the processional way along the wadi leading from the temple precinct past the royal tombs of the first two dynasties at Umm el-Qaab to a cleft in the hills of the western escarpment about 1 km due south of that site.[415] The spell says that its beneficiary will go forth from the Thinite nome and descend into the valley.[416] Here again, the difficulty is to know whether these actions were supposed to be performed in a cultic setting or not and, if so, whether the cult in question was that of Osiris. The problem is further complicated by the fact that there was a 'great valley' in Busiris as well, and we cannot exclude the possibility that the Pyramid Text spell refers to this.[417]

4.12.2. The cult of Osiris at Abydos in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom

Although Osiris is called lord of Abydos in offering formulas on private monuments originating from that city as early as the sixth dynasty, and the deceased are sometimes called *imakh* before Osiris in Abydene tombs of that date, it is not until the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom that unambiguous evidence for the actual performance of the god's cult there begins to appear. The most important evidence for such cultic activity is provided by stelae inscribed with the Abydos Formula. As discussed in section 4.9.2, the earliest specimens of this date to the eleventh dynasty. The formula reaches its fullest development in the twelfth dynasty, coinciding with the period when construction of private offering chapels in the area west of the Osiris temple precinct called 'the terrace of the great god' reached its peak.[418] Relatively little evidence of eleventh and twelfth dynasty royal building activity has survived in the main temple area at Abydos, since this was mostly destroyed as a result of New Kingdom rebuilding.[419]

Another indicator of the growing importance of Abydos as a cult centre of Osiris at this time is that representations of voyages to that city begin to appear in private tombs.[420] The earliest example occurs in the tomb of Dagi at Thebes, which dates to the

[415] See section 2.3.2. [416] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 484 (§867a).

[417] See S. Sauneron, *Rituel de l'embaumement* (Cairo, 1952), p. 3 (P. Boulaq 3, 2/9). One could have here a further instance of the practice of juxtaposing references to Busirite localities with references to Abydene ones, as discussed in note 405.

[418] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 69–70; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 92–6; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 1, pp. 522–5; Végh in Neunert, Simon, Verbovsek, and Gabler (eds), *Text: Wissen—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung*, pp. 262–5.

[419] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 73–86, 97–107, and 109–38; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 88–9.

[420] See H. Altenmüller, 'Abydosfahrt', in W. Helck and E. Otto (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1975), pp. 42–7.

late eleventh dynasty.[421] In scenes of this type, a boat conveys the deceased, depicted as a mummy or a statue, usually accompanied by his wife and priests who perform rituals for his benefit, to the holy destination. In some instances, the boat is escorted by additional vessels; in others, it sails alone. Labels above such scenes describe the journey as 'voyaging to fetch the requirements of Abydos' for the tomb owner,[422] or 'proceeding to Abydos, thanking Osiris, and kissing the ground for the great god, lord of the west during the great procession' by him.[423] The latter description makes allusion to one of the major episodes in the mysteries of Osiris. Later representations of the voyage to Abydos are even more explicit in stating that the purpose of the journey is to permit the tomb owner to participate in those mysteries.[424]

How should one account for the increased prominence of the Abydene cult of Osiris at this time? It has been suggested that the rise in its importance in the eleventh dynasty was the result of a wider programme of patronage of cult centres throughout the country instituted by the unifiers of Egypt, to associate themselves with the local gods.[425] Because of its religious importance, Abydos may have received particular attention following its political annexation by the Thebans.[426] If so, then this would be a clear instance of state involvement in promoting the worship of a particular deity. But there may have been other factors involved as well, of which we are unaware. Be that as it may, the sources that document the increased prominence of Osiris at Abydos in the eleventh dynasty and later differ significantly from earlier ones both in terms of how they present the relationship between that god and the deceased and what features of it they emphasize. We will explore the nature of this difference in the ensuing sections of the present chapter.

4.12.3. Abydos as a venue for interaction between Osiris and the deceased in this world

Some Pyramid Text spells enjoin the beneficiary to come to Abydos. Thus, Spell 437 and its variant, Spell 610, say 'You will fare upstream to the Thinite nome and traverse Abydos.'[427] However, none seem to explain why he should do so, or envisage any form of interaction between him and Osiris there. On the other hand, as early as the fourth dynasty, offering formulas in private tombs express the wish that the tomb owner might receive offerings on the occasion of certain festivals. Among these are the

[421] Leahy, *JEA* 75 (1989), p. 56 note 59.
[422] See e.g. P. Newberry, *Beni Hasan* 1 (London, 1893), plate 14.
[423] See e.g. N. Davies and A. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Antefoker, Vizier of Sesostris I, and of his Wife Senet (No. 60)* (London, 1920), plate 18.
[424] Altenmüller in Helck and Otto (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1, pp. 45–6.
[425] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 88–92.
[426] Pouls Wegner, *The Cult of Osiris at Abydos*, pp. 66–7.
[427] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 439 (§798b–c); Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 405–6 (§1716a–b).

opening of the year festival, the Thoth festival, the wag festival, the beginning of the month festival, and the half month festival.[428] Normally, these texts do not indicate where the festivals in question are supposed to take place. Where the venue for the reception of offerings is specified, the occasion is not. In an inscription from the tomb of the fourth dynasty queen Mersiankh III at Giza, for instance, it is requested that the offering formula be recited for her in her tomb, in Busiris, in Abydos, and in every place where it is recited for a noble woman.[429] Another inscription from the fifth dynasty mastaba of Akhethotep at Giza requests that the tomb owner receive all good offerings of the necropolis, Busiris, Abydos, and the pyramid of Khafre.[430]

Since in later periods Busiris and Abydos are frequently linked together as cult centres of Osiris, it is tempting to see here wishes to receive offerings in the context of Osirian festivals. However, the first text pre-dates the earliest known reference to Osiris in our sources, so we cannot be absolutely certain that this was the case. It is possible that the god was not yet connected with these two cities and they are mentioned in conjunction for some other reason.[431] Even if the texts just cited do refer to Osirian festivals at Busiris and Abydos, they contain no suggestion that the deceased will actually go to those places and be physically present at or participate in the festivals in question.[432] The same is true of those texts which express the desire that the deceased might receive offerings at other named festivals like the Thoth festival and the half month festival where the venue is unspecified.

It is in this respect that the sources of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom mark a significant change from earlier ones. They envisage a specific festival celebrated in honour of the god Osiris at a particular place, Abydos, which deceased people could actually attend and in which they could take part alongside those who were still alive. Thus their interaction with the deity was not limited to the land of the dead over which Osiris reigned. They could join with other devotees in worshipping him in the land of the living as well. Being a follower of Osiris enabled the deceased to span both worlds.

The ability to leave the realm of the dead to return to earth is called 'going forth by day' (*pr.t m hrw*) in Egyptian sources. This concept became particularly important in the New Kingdom, but it is attested earlier as well. The expression 'going forth by day' itself occurs as far back as the Old Kingdom,[433] but the texts we are considering now, in which the deceased express the wish to return to Abydos to participate in the mysteries

[428] See Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 10, 18, and 32.

[429] D. Dunham and W. Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III* (Boston, 1974), p. 18 and figure 10.

[430] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 18; S. Hassan, *Excavations at Gîza* 1 (Oxford, 1932), p. 77, figure 36.

[431] See section 3.1.2. [432] See section 2.8.1.

[433] See J. Janák, H. Vymazalová, and F. Coppens, 'The Fifth Dynasty "Sun Temples" in a Broader Context', in M. Bárta, F. Coppens, and J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2010/1* (Prague, 2011), p. 434; B. Midant-Reynes and S. Denoix, 'Travaux de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale 2009–2010', *BIFAO* 110 (2010), p. 343.

of Osiris conducted there, are among the first sources to provide detailed information about what this actually involved.[434] Such texts link the temporal with the spatial. In them, it is not only at a specific moment that the deceased desire to manifest themselves on earth, but in a specific place as well. Thus they configure the relationship between Osiris and his followers in terms of both time and space.

4.12.4. The mysteries of Osiris at Abydos

What was the nature of the festive occasion which attracted both the living and the dead to Abydos? The mysteries of Osiris were celebrated annually during the inundation season.[435] They commemorated, but were also supposed to reify, his restoration to life after he was murdered by his brother Seth. Accordingly, the key events of this episode, the god's mummification, protection, justification, and burial were ritually re-enacted. A central feature of the mysteries was a procession, the so-called 'great procession', in which a figure of Osiris was carried in the *neshmet*-bark from the god's temple to Poker, the sacred precinct which was believed to contain his tomb, and back again. During the period under consideration, this precinct was located at Umm el-Qaab, the burial place of the kings of the early dynastic period,[436] where seal impressions and pottery dating from the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom

[434] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 395–6, and literature cited there.

[435] For the description that follows, see R. Anthes, 'Die Berichte des Neferhotep und des Ichernofret über das Osirisfest in Abydos', in W. Müller (ed.), *Festschrift zum 150jährigen Bestehen des Berliner Ägyptischen Museums* (Berlin, 1974), pp. 15–50; K. Eaton, 'The Festivals of Osiris and Sokar in the Month of Khoiak: The Evidence from Nineteenth Dynasty Royal Monuments at Abydos', *SAK* 35 (2006), pp. 75–7; C. Karlshausen, *L'iconographie de la barque processionelle divine en Égypte au Nouvel Empire* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2009), pp. 14–22; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 89–91; U. Effland and A. Effland, *Abydos: Tor zur ägyptischen Unterwelt* (Darmstadt and Mainz, 2013), pp. 14–17; Otto, *Osiris und Amun: Kult und heilige Stätten*, pp. 38–42; J. Assmann, *Tod und Jenseits im alten Ägypten* (Munich, 2001), pp. 308–12; M.-C. Lavier, 'Les mystères d'Osiris à Abydos d'après les stèles du Moyen Empire et du Nouvel Empire', in S. Schoske (ed.), *Akten des vierten internationalen Ägyptologen Kongresses München 1985*, Band 3 (Hamburg, 1989), pp. 289–95; Pouls Wegner, *The Cult of Osiris at Abydos*, pp. 75–8; Hays in Nyord and Kjølby (eds), *'Being in Ancient Egypt'*, pp. 15–16; F. Gaudard, *The Demotic Drama of Horus and Seth (P. Berlin 8278A, B, C; 15662; 15677; 15818; 23536; 23537A, B, C, D, E, F, G)* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2005), pp. 108–24, all with references to additional literature. On the archaeological evidence for the mysteries of Osiris at Abydos, see V. Müller, 'Archäologische Relikte kultischer Aktivitäten in Umm el-Qaʿab/Abydos', in J. Mylonopoulos and H. Roeder (eds), *Archäologie und Ritual: Auf der Suche nach der rituellen Handlung in den antiken Kulturen Ägyptens und Griechenlands* (Vienna, 2006), pp. 37–52; A. Kucharek, 'Die Prozession des Osiris in Abydos: Zur Signifikanz archäologischer Quellen für die Rekonstruktion eines zentralen Festrituals', ibid., pp. 53–64; Végh in Neunert, Simon, Verbovsek, and Gabler (eds), *Text: Wissen—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung*, pp. 259–76. A new study of the mysteries is currently being prepared by Zsuzsanna Végh.

[436] Leahy, *JEA* 75 (1989), pp. 57–9; C. Leitz, *Geographisch-osirianische Prozessionen aus Philae, Dendara und Athribis* (Wiesbaden, 2012), pp. 113–14.

have been discovered.[437] The tomb of Djer, second ruler of the first dynasty, was regarded as the actual sepulchre of Osiris.[438]

The 'great procession' moved from the god's temple at Kom es-Sultan to Umm el-Qaab via a long wadi. Along the way, the *neshmet*-bark had to be defended from enemies who might attack it. Some think that a mock combat may have taken place, in which some participants in the mysteries assumed the role of followers of Seth attacking the bark and were repelled from it by the rest.[439] Others think that the recitation of apotropaic incantations was sufficient to defend the vessel.[440] It was within sight of this wadi, in or adjacent to the area known as the terrace of the great god, that the private cenotaph chapels discussed in section 4.9.4 were set up, thus allowing their owners a clear view of the proceedings. In the early thirteenth dynasty, a royal decree prohibited any unauthorized person from trespassing upon this processional route, or from constructing a tomb within it, on pain of being burnt alive.[441]

Several of the constituent wishes of the Abydos Formula concern the deceased's participation in episodes that took place during the mysteries of Osiris. The fifth wish, for example, already attested in the eleventh dynasty, is that hands be given to the deceased in the *neshmet*-bark on the ways of the west. This is significant, because it is unusual to find explicit references to these rites before the twelfth dynasty.[442] The ninth wish is that the deceased travel with the great god during the voyage of the god to Poker, while the great *neshmet*-bark is en route during the festivals of the god's domain, the tenth that the bull of the west (scil. Osiris) transfigure them when they join him at his oars, the eleventh that they hear jubilation in the mouth of the Great Land during the Haker feast, the night of lying down, and the vigil of Shenhor, and the sixteenth that they receive offerings on the occasion of various festivals, including the great procession.[443] Other texts emphasize the desire of the deceased to see Osiris or Wepwaut, who conducts the god along the processional way, and join the throng of followers who accompany his bark.[444]

In sources of later periods, the central feature of the mysteries of Osiris is the fabrication and temporary burial of two small figures representing that deity and Sokar, with whom Osiris is identified.[445] After a year's interment, these figures are

[437] Müller in Mylonopoulos and Roeder (eds), *Archäologie und Ritual*, p. 45; U. Effland, J. Budka, and A. Effland, 'Studien zum Osiriskult in Umm el-Qaab/Abydos—Ein Vorbericht', *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 39, 55, and 58; Effland and Effland, *Abydos*, p. 17.

[438] Leahy, *JEA* 75 (1989), pp. 55–7; Effland and Effland, *Abydos*, pp. 14–15.

[439] See e.g. Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 93.

[440] Otto, *Osiris und Amun: Kult und heilige Stätten*, pp. 39–40. Cf. Végh in Neunert, Simon, Verbovsek, and Gabler (eds), *Text: Wissen—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung*, p. 261, who suggests that participation in its defence may have been restricted to only a few.

[441] Leahy, *JEA* 75 (1989), pp. 41–54.

[442] See Hays in Nyord and Kjølby (eds), *'Being in Egypt'*, p. 16 note 13.

[443] See Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom*, pp. 55–64, 78–9, 86–8, 94–5, and 114–22; Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 62–9 and 417–18.

[444] e.g. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom*, pp. 60, 68, 73, 93, 112–16, and 130–3; Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 49, 64, and 66.

[445] See L. Coulon, 'Le culte osirien au Ier millénaire av. J.-C.: Une mise en perspective(s)', in L. Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents* (Cairo, 2010), pp. 9–12, and

replaced with new ones and moved to a permanent resting place. The process is repeated annually, thereby ensuring the god's perpetual renewal. The inscriptions pertaining to the Osiris mysteries preserved in the temple of Hathor at Dendera indicate that this ritual was performed at Abydos as well.[446] However, there is no evidence for the fabrication of any figure of this type at Abydos during the period with which we are concerned now, unless this is to be equated with the figure that some texts say was transported in the *neshmet*-bark.[447]

Another discrepancy between earlier and later sources concerns the date when the mysteries of Osiris were celebrated. In later periods, this took place during the second half of the fourth month of the inundation season, while sources of the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom indicate a date in the first month of that season.[448] This raises the question of how closely related the earlier and later versions of the Osiris mysteries actually are. Although they have a number of salient features in common,[449] we may be unjustified in assuming that one was the direct ancestor of the other.

4.12.5. Was Abydos the only place where Osiris and the deceased interacted in this world?

During the period under consideration, Abydos served as an interface between this world and the next. Its mysteries provided an occasion when the distinction between the two was temporarily abolished, and both living and dead joined together in the worship of Osiris. In later Egyptian sources, for example, the Book of Traversing Eternity, extant copies of which date to the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, Abydos is only one of several venues where interaction of this sort is envisaged, although it remains among the most important.[450] Was the same true during the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom or was the case of Abydos unique? Did celebrations analogous to the Abydene Osiris mysteries take place elsewhere? No other locality in Egypt has yielded the sort of evidence for festivities of this nature that Abydos has provided in such abundance, but this does not mean that there were none in other cities.

references cited there; A. von Lieven, 'Das Verhältnis zwischen Tempel und Grab im griechisch-römischen Ägypten', *RdE* 61 (2010), p. 97 note 35.

[446] See S. Cauville, *Dendara* 10 (Cairo, 1997), pp. 29–30; S. Cauville, *Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes* 1 (Cairo, 1997), p. 16; É. Chassinat, *Le mystère d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak* 1 (Cairo, 1966), pp. 248–60.

[447] Cf. Eaton, *SAK* 35 (2006), p. 77.

[448] See J. Quack, 'Reste eines Kultkalenders (Pap. Berlin P. 14472 + Pap. Strasbourg BNU hier. 38 a und Pap. Berlin P. 29065)', in V. Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung: Eine Festgabe für das Neue Museum* (Berlin, 2012), pp. 200–2. I am grateful to Zsuzsanna Végh for discussing this evidence with me.

[449] Cf. F. Gaudard, 'P. Berlin P. 8278 and its Fragments: Testimony of the Osirian Khoiak Festival Celebration during the Ptolemaic Period', in Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung*, pp. 272–6.

[450] See Herbin, *Le livre de parcourir l'éternité*; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 395–431.

Siut is one place where the mysteries of Osiris appear to have been celebrated. An autobiographical inscription in the tomb of the nomarch Djefahapi I, who lived in the reign of Sesostris I, makes reference to the act of following the god to his place, his tomb (*mʿḥ.t*) which is in Raqereret (part of the necropolis of Siut), which suggests a procession like the one that took place in Abydos. In the same passage, the text also refers to the hidden mystery of Osiris, the holy valley of the lord of life, and the secret image of the lord of Abydos, which further strengthens this impression.[451] But these references occur in a speech where the tomb owner is describing the solicitude for Osiris and other gods that he displayed when he was still alive. The text says nothing about the possibility that he or any other deceased person might return to Siut and participate in a procession of Osiris there posthumously.

Busiris in the delta was another important cult centre of Osiris, and it too was venerated as the burial place of the god.[452] Some of the representations of the voyage to Abydos in tombs discussed in section 4.12.2 depict a voyage to Busiris as well.[453] This may have been undertaken for the same purpose as the voyage to Abydos, to allow the tomb owner to participate in rites celebrated for Osiris there. In this connection, it is interesting to note that wishes in offering formulas of the period under consideration sometimes couple the two cities. One wish found in formulas of the eleventh and twelfth dynasties, for example, including the Abydos Formula, is that the great ones of Busiris and the entourage of the lord of Abydos glorify the deceased.[454] This suggests that the same importance was attached to the dead person's reception in the former as it was to his welcome in the latter. There may have been other places where this held true as well, for which the evidence has now disappeared.

4.13. OSIRIS, THE DECEASED, AND THE *BA*

Another important development during the period under consideration is the increased importance of the *ba* in the relationship between Osiris and the deceased. This is the aspect in which the deceased could manifest themselves in and interact with the physical world. In *ba* form, they could leave the land of the dead and travel to other spheres like the sky and earth. As we saw in section 2.1.4, the noun *ba* itself or a derivative of it is attested as an element in personal names, with no apparent

[451] See F. Griffith, *The Inscriptions of Siut and Der Rifeh* (London, 1889), plate 5, lines 238–9; P. Montet, 'Les tombeaux de Siout et de Deir Rifeh (suite)', *Kêmi* 3 (1930–5), p. 50; K. Sethe, *Historisch-biographische Urkunden des Mittleren Reiches* 1 (Leipzig, 1935), p. 57, lines 1–5. For additional bibliography on this tomb and its inscriptions, see J. Kahl, *Siut-Theben: Zur Wertschätzung von Traditionen im alten Ägypten* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 1999), pp. 18–19. I am very grateful to Zsuzsanna Végh for bringing this text to my attention.

[452] J. von Beckerath, 'Busiris', in Helck and Otto (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1, pp. 883–4.

[453] H. Altenmüller, 'Busiris, Fahrt nach…', ibid., p. 884.

[454] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 48 and 61.

connection with the afterlife, as early as the reign of the first dynasty king Djer. It also appears in the names of the pyramids of some fifth dynasty rulers, although there the word may simply mean 'manifestation', referring to the pyramid itself, rather than *ba* in the specific sense described in the initial lines of this paragraph.

4.13.1. Osiris and the *ba* of the deceased in the Old Kingdom?

The earliest unambiguous references to the *ba* of the deceased occur in the Pyramid Texts of the late fifth and the sixth dynasty, and in a few private tombs dating to the latter. In neither context, however, does it play a very significant role in their relationship with the god Osiris. Pyramid Text Spell 223 invites the deceased king to partake of offerings, urging him 'Come to your *ba*, Osiris, a *ba* among the *akhs*, a powerful one who is in his places, whom the Ennead protect in the mansion of the magistrate.'[455] Some translators have understood the noun 'Osiris' here to be in apposition to 'your *ba*', so that the passage identifies the god as the *ba* of the deceased, but this is unlikely. It is more probable that 'Osiris' is simply a vocative addressed to the king, as is often the case in Pyramid Text offering spells,[456] an interpretation which is supported by later versions of this utterance in which 'Osiris' is actually followed by the title and name of the deceased.[457] In an offering formula in the tomb of Hormeru at Saqqara (sixth dynasty), the wish is expressed that his *ba* might endure in the presence of the god.[458] The noun 'god' there could refer to Osiris, but this is only one of several possibilities. Another text of the same date in the tomb of Mehu at Saqqara says that the *ba* of the deceased will come, but without specifying where.[459]

4.13.2. Osiris and the *ba* of the deceased in the Coffin Texts

In the Coffin Texts, by contrast, the *ba* plays a more prominent role in the interaction between deceased and deity. In Spell 94, for instance, intended to separate the beneficiary's *ba* from his corpse in the underworld, also identified as a book for going forth by day, the dead person claims to be 'this great *ba* of Osiris through whom the gods ordained that he copulate'.[460] Elsewhere in the same spell, he asserts that he is the one whom the god formed from his efflux and seed in order to go forth by day that he might

[455] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 123 (§215b–c).

[456] See L. Žabkar, *A Study of the Ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts* (Chicago, 1968), p. 56 note 28; H. Altenmüller, 'Sein Ba möge fortdauern bei Gott', *SAK* 20 (1993), pp. 13–14 note 37.

[457] See e.g. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir* 2, plate 8.

[458] Altenmüller, *SAK* 20 (1993), p. 2, Abb. 1.

[459] H. Altenmüller, *Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu in Saqqara* (Mainz am Rhein, 1998), p. 145 and plate 32.

[460] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, pp. 67c–d and 70c–d. Cf. R. Nyord, *Breathing Flesh: Conceptions of the Body in the Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Copenhagen, 2009), pp. 434–5.

copulate thereby, his son.[461] Similar claims are made in Spell 96, where the deceased also says that Osiris has made him into a living *ba* of his.[462] In Coffin Text Spell 335, the title of which is 'Going forth by day from the god's domain', the deceased claims to be 'his two *bas* who are within his two fledglings', which a gloss identifies as Osiris and Re.[463] In Spell 492, he asks that his *ba* not be restrained because it is 'this *ba* of the bull of the west (scil. Osiris), to whom procreation should be granted upon earth'.[464]

In all of these spells, two themes are especially prominent. The first is that of going forth by day, in other words, returning from the underworld to the land of the living. The second is the ability to copulate and procreate once there.[465] The *ba* is essential for both activities. We have already seen the importance of the former as a goal of posthumous existence during the period under consideration, but the latter is attested as a genuine Egyptian aspiration for the afterlife at this time as well.[466] The deceased, who is both recitant and beneficiary of the spells in question, identifies himself as a great *ba* or living *ba* of Osiris, the veritable offspring of the god, in order to procure the power to do these things. Thus his self-attribution of this status in the context of the recitation provides a vehicle whereby he can return to earth and engage in posthumous sexual activity, following the precedent of Osiris himself.

The deictic word *pw*, 'this', plays an important role in these self-attributions. By means of it, the deceased identifies himself as a specific member of a group, variously defined as great *bas* of Osiris, living *bas* of Osiris, or *bas* of the bull of the west. The deictic word singles him out as the particular individual belonging to these categories who forms the subject of the discourse. So the status of *ba* of Osiris does not simply associate the deceased with the god, it connects him with a group as well, one composed of other *bas* who share the same relationship with the deity. In this respect, being a living *ba* of Osiris is tantamount to being one of the god's followers in the afterlife. The connection between the two statuses is made explicit in Coffin Text Spell 604, where the deceased, who is once again both recitant and beneficiary, asks that food be brought to him because he is a living *ba*, a follower of Osiris.[467] As a member of the god's entourage, the *ba*'s material needs should be supplied in the next world. This is confirmed by the title of the spell, according to which its purpose is to procure sustenance for the beneficiary in the god's domain.

Coffin Text Spell 314 makes reference to the 'excellent *bas*' (*bꜣ.w mnḫ.w*) of the house of Osiris. The deceased asks those who conduct these *bas* to the god's house to give him

[461] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, pp. 68b–69b and 71b–72a. Cf. Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, pp. 434–5.
[462] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, pp. 77a–78c and 79c. Cf. Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, pp. 436–7.
[463] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, pp. 277a–280a.
[464] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 72g–i. Cf. Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, p. 455.
[465] For the connection between the two, see ibid., pp. 432–3.
[466] See Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 67, 238, and 314; de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 331m. On the sexual potency of the deceased, see M. Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507* (London, 1987), p. 64, and literature cited there; Nyord, *Breathing Flesh*, pp. 424–59.
[467] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 218e–f.

bread and beer at all times, and requests those who open ways and roads for them to open ways and roads for his *ba* so that it can enter the house of Osiris freely and in peace without being turned away.[468] Here too, the *bas* constitute a group defined by its members' association with Osiris. The benefits that this association confers upon them include proximity to the god, freedom of movement without hindrance, and access to sustenance, just as in the other spells discussed earlier in this section. Once more we see the importance of the *ba* as a medium for interaction between the deity and the deceased.

4.13.3. The rarity of allusions to the *ba* in texts concerned with the Osiris mysteries

The mysteries of Osiris at Abydos were one of the chief occasions when the dead hoped to return to this world and join with the living as members of the god's entourage. Since it is as *bas* that they were believed to be capable of manifesting themselves on earth and the *ba* form provided a vehicle whereby they could become followers of the deity, one might expect that Egyptian sources detailing the deceased's participation in the mysteries of Osiris would make frequent reference to their *bas*. Surprisingly, this is not the case during the period under consideration. Although texts of later times regularly state that the *ba* of the deceased will follow or serve Osiris,[469] no text from our period does so. In fact, references to the *ba* are extremely rare in accounts of or allusions to the mysteries preserved in sources of this time.[470]

Also rare are references to the *ba* of the deceased in offering formula wishes and related texts on stelae of the First Intermediate Period or the Middle Kingdom. The stela of Antef, who lived under Sesostris I, requests those who pass by to make his name live, affirming that 'the *ba* will be content when they have caused it to be remembered'.[471] In an offering formula on a stela now in the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro, Inv. 643 [2433], 'existence as a living *ba*' appears among the boons requested.[472] This is of interest because the offering formula is followed immediately by a text addressed to the owner of the stela, clearly modeled on the Abydos Formula, which says that he will participate in the Osiris mysteries. This is one of the few sources at our disposal that demonstrates, albeit obliquely, the existence of a link between the status of living *ba* and one's ability to join in those celebrations.

[468] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 96a–f.

[469] See examples cited in S. Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2011), pp. 784 and 795.

[470] For one example, see the stela of Semti from Abydos (BM EA 574): Simpson, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, plate 61; Sethe, *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht*, p. 75, line 20; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom*, p. 97.

[471] Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember*, pp. 120–1.

[472] See Kitchen, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection in the National Museum, Rio de Janeiro*, p. 55 and plates 37–8. According to Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, Index, p. 346 (s.v. *bꜣ*), the *ba* is not mentioned in offering formula wishes before the eighteenth dynasty but, as shown in section 4.13.1, it is already attested in them in the Old Kingdom.

4.14. OSIRIS, THE DECEASED, AND OTHER DIVINITIES

From his earliest appearance in the historical record, Osiris is one of a group of divinities who perform services for the dead, some of whom, e.g. Anubis, are already attested in this role before he is.[473] The same is true in the period under consideration. Although Osiris is the primary deity with whom the deceased interact, he is by no means the only one with whom they can enjoy a relationship. In some instances, he himself plays no direct part in their interactions with other deities. In others, he exerts himself on their behalf in concert with his fellow gods. Occasionally, Osiris is syncretized with another divinity or divinities, and it is this composite deity with whom the deceased interact.

4.14.1. Sokar

The two gods with whom Osiris is syncretized most frequently in the period under consideration are Sokar and Khentiamentiu. The former is attested as an independent god prior to the earliest reference to Osiris,[474] but there is no evidence to associate him specifically with the dead until the sixth dynasty, when some private tomb inscriptions describe the tomb owner as *ỉmꜣḫ ḫr Skr*, 'revered in the presence of Sokar'. He does not appear as a donor in offering formulas until the Middle Kingdom.[475] In some Pyramid Text spells of the fifth and sixth dynasties the deceased king is identified with Sokar for ritual purposes, while in a few sixth dynasty spells that god is said to perform various services for the king, e.g. purifying him and greeting him.[476] In this respect, however, he is no different to numerous other deities. Likewise in the Coffin Texts, the god is said to purify the deceased and do other things for their benefit.[477]

According to Brovarski, Sokar was already a name or aspect of Osiris as early as the Pyramid Texts.[478] It would appear that this view is based on certain spells in that corpus where the beneficiary is said to do something or have something done for him in his name of Sokar. A good example is Spell 364: 'Horus has borne you in his name of *henu*-bark, lifting you up in your name of Sokar.'[479] But in cases like this it is the deceased king who is addressed, not Osiris, so they cannot be used as evidence for an Old Kingdom syncretism between that god and Sokar. The composite deity Sokar-Osiris is first attested in the First Intermediate Period, but does not become common until the Middle Kingdom,[480] when he is sometimes subsumed into the triune form

[473] See section 3.6.2. [474] See section 2.4.1.
[475] Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis*, p. 37.
[476] For references to Sokar in the Pyramid Texts, see Hannig, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch I*, p. 1609.
[477] See Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten*, pp. 172–5.
[478] E. Brovarski, 'Sokar', in Helck and Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5, p. 1060.
[479] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 333 (§620b–c).
[480] Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis*, p. 15.

Ptah-Sokar-Osiris.[481] A variant of this god's name, Osiris-Sokar, comes into use during the New Kingdom.[482]

It is not immediately obvious how association with Sokar-Osiris or Ptah-Sokar-Osiris differs from that with Osiris alone from the point of view of the deceased. During the period under consideration, these composite deities mainly appear as donors in the offering formulas inscribed on stelae and other objects.[483] The sorts of boons that they are asked to grant to the dead are not notably dissimilar to those granted by Osiris himself, e.g. invocation and other types of offerings. Occasionally, the list of requested boons is longer. Thus in a stela of unknown provenance now in Cairo, CG 20327, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris is asked to grant, in addition to invocation offerings, the status of *akh*, might, justification, inhaling the breeze in the god's domain, and going forth by day.[484]

Just as the deceased can be called *Wsỉr* NN or *Wsỉr n* NN, 'Osiris of NN', as a marker of their status as followers of the god, so too can they be called *Skr Wsỉr* NN, 'Sokar-Osiris of NN', as a sign of their specific affiliation with that composite deity.[485] According to Allen, this locution did not come into use until the New Kingdom,[486] but in fact it is already attested in our period, as shown by a Middle Kingdom stela of unknown provenance now in Cairo, CG 20742, where the deified Old Kingdom ruler Snefru is named as the donor in an offering formula under the sobriquet *Skr-Wsỉr nswt bỉty Snfrw*, 'Sokar-Osiris of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Snefru'.[487]

4.14.2. Khentiamentiu

Perhaps one should not really speak of syncretism between Osiris and Khentiamentiu, since the former completely absorbs the latter, whose name then becomes simply an epithet of that god, like 'lord of Busiris' or 'lord of Abydos'.[488] Khentiamentiu is

[481] Brovarski in Helck and Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5, p. 1060; M. Sandman Holmberg, *The God Ptah* (Lund, 1946), pp. 138–9; Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, p. 74.

[482] Brovarski in Helck and Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5, p. 1060.

[483] See the examples listed in R. Hannig, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch II: Mittleres Reich und Zweite Zwischenzeit* (Mainz am Rhein, 2006), pp. 3065–6 and 3149, and J. Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos: Studien zum ägyptischen Synkretismus* (Wiesbaden, 1973), pp. 178–9.

[484] Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, p. 340.

[485] See Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 200; Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 325.

[486] J. Allen, 'A Monument of Khaemwaset Honoring Imhotep', in E. Teeter and J. Larson (eds), *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente* (Chicago, 1999), p. 8.

[487] Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, p. 375; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 4, plate 56. Cf. Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos*, pp. 18 and 179. For the practice of naming deceased kings and private individuals as donors in offering formulas of this time, see Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 56–7; J. Malek, 'Old-Kingdom Rulers as "Local Saints" in the Memphite Area during the Middle Kingdom', in M. Bárta and J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Prague, 2000), pp. 250–4.

[488] Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos*, p. 109.

another deity who appears in the written record long before the advent of Osiris. A god thus designated is attested in a funerary role at Abydos as early as the first dynasty.[489] The problem is that one cannot be certain whether Khentiamentiu is the name of an independent deity at that time or only an epithet denoting another divinity. There is no unequivocal evidence for an independent deity called Khentiamentiu until the second half of the fifth dynasty, when he appears as a donor in offering formulas that name him in parallel with gods like Anubis and Osiris, referring to each in a separate clause and thus clearly distinguishing them.[490]

The precise point at which Osiris supplanted Khentiamentiu and assumed his attributes is difficult to ascertain. The problem is complicated by two factors. On the one hand, the name of Osiris can already be followed by Khentiamentiu during the period when an autonomous god of that name is still clearly attested.[491] Thus the fact that he is so designated in a text of a given date does not prove that there was no longer a separate deity Khentiamentiu at that time. On the other hand, in the twelfth dynasty, by which time Khentiamentiu had certainly been subsumed into Osiris, it is not unusual for the latter god to be referred to by this epithet alone. See, for example, the inscription on a stela belonging to the overseer of the storehouse Amenemhet, dating to year 13 of Amenemhet II (BM EA 567), in particular the reference to 'Khentiamentiu, lord of Busiris, ruler of Abydos' in line 22 of that text, which shows clearly that Osiris is meant even though he is not mentioned by name.[492] This raises the question of how early the practice of designating the god in this way arose. It is conceivable that Khentiamentiu may have been used on its own to denote Osiris even when there was still a separate god of that name. How then can we determine to which deity a given example of Khentiamentiu refers?

As we saw in section 4.9.2, the wishes in offering formulas of the eleventh dynasty make reference to both Osiris and Khentiamentiu. The same is true of those of the twelfth and thirteenth dynasties. In the latter, by virtue of their date, we can be certain that these are simply alternate ways of referring to the same god. One particular wish attested in such sources, that the deceased might receive what is heaped upon the noble altar before Khentiamentiu, occurs in offering formulas of the eleventh dynasty as well. Presumably the earlier exemplars of this wish refer to the same deity as the later ones do. Thus we have clear examples from the eleventh dynasty in which Khentiamentiu on its own refers to Osiris. This is not surprising, given the fact that other texts

[489] See sections 2.3.2 and 2.4.2.

[490] See, for example, T.G.H. James, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae Etc.* 1² (London, 1961), plate 17 (upper); A. Mariette, *Les mastabas de l'Ancien Empire* (Paris, 1889), p. 230; Daoud, *Corpus of Inscriptions of the Herakleopolitan Period from the Memphite Necropolis*, pp. 30–1.

[491] See e.g. the sixth dynasty examples of Osiris Khentiamentiu in Borchardt, *CGC: Denkmäler des Alten Reiches (ausser den Statuen) im Museum von Kairo* 1, pp. 72 and 115–16, with plates 18 and 28–9 (nos. 1409, 1434, and 1435), and L. Borchardt, *CGC: Denkmäler des Alten Reiches (ausser den Statuen) im Museum von Kairo* 2 (Cairo, 1964), p. 86 (no. 1615) and plate 82.

[492] See Simpson, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, plate 22. Cf. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom*, pp. 114–16.

of this time, in particular the early versions of the Abydos Formula, confirm the pre-eminence of Osiris among local deities there.[493]

It is of considerable interest that the composite form Osiris Khentiamentiu is attested in private inscriptions well before it occurs in royal ones. We have already cited a number of examples dating to the sixth dynasty. This particular form of Osiris is also mentioned in private texts from Abydos dating to the eleventh dynasty. Thus, the stela of a priest called Mentuhotep requests those who pass by his tomb to say 'May Osiris Khentiamentiu transform Mentuhotep into an *akh*.'[494] In private texts of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth dynasties from Abydos, the combination Osiris Khentiamentiu is employed in conjunction with a wide range of other epithets as well.[495]

Wegner and Forgeau believe that references to Osiris Khentiamentiu can already be found in inscriptions from the remains of eleventh dynasty royal monuments at Abydos.[496] However, the examples that they cite as supporting evidence for this view make no reference to Osiris. Rather they refer to Khentiamentiu alone, whose name is determined with a sign depicting a seated figure wearing the white crown and holding royal regalia. According to Wegner and Forgeau, this sign represents Osiris, but in fact the white crown is an attribute of Khentiamentiu before it is associated with him,[497] so there is no need to see any Osirian allusion in these examples. The earliest secure references to Osiris Khentiamentiu on royal monuments from Abydos date to the twelfth dynasty.[498] With one exception, so do the earliest ones to Osiris himself on monuments of this type. The exception is the chapel of Mentuhotep II situated at the northwest corner of the temenos wall of the temple of Seti I.[499] As far as I am aware, this is the only royal monument of eleventh dynasty date at Abydos that mentions Osiris by name. Its inscriptions refer to both that god and Khentiamentiu, maintaining a clear distinction between the two.[500] Thus, the fusion of these two deities first finds expression in non-royal sources at Abydos, and only later in royal ones.

As noted in section 2.10.2, the fact that something is attested in the non-royal sphere first is no proof that this is where it originated, just as the fact that something is attested in the royal sphere first does not prove that it originated there. Therefore we cannot use this as evidence that the impetus for the fusion of Osiris and Khentiamentiu at Abydos

[493] See section 4.9.2; Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos*, pp. 7–8.
[494] Petrie, *Tombs of the Courtiers and Oxyrhynkhos*, pp. 10 and 19, plates 22–3.
[495] Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos*, pp. 25–37.
[496] Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, pp. 78–9, 81, and 86; Forgeau, *Hors-fils-d'Isis: La jeunesse d'un dieu*, p. 101.
[497] See H. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C. down to the Theban Domination of Upper Egypt* (Locust Valley, 1968), p. 199; R. Shalomi-Hen, *The Writing of Gods: The Evolution of Divine Classifiers in the Old Kingdom* (Wiesbaden, 2006), p. 109; T. DuQuesne, *The Jackal Divinities of Egypt 1: From the Archaic Period to Dynasty X* (London, 2005), p. 168.
[498] See section 4.9.7.
[499] See J. Wegner, 'A New Temple: The *Mahat* of Nebhepetre at Abydos', *Egyptian Archaeology* 46 (2015), pp. 3–7 (reference courtesy of Zsuzsanna Végh).
[500] Ibid., pp. 4–5.

arose in the private sphere initially. It does suggest, however, that the process whereby one god absorbed the other may have been a gradual one, which took some time to reach complete fruition. It should be noted that even after this fusion had taken place, other gods who had previously borne the epithet Khentiamentiu could still be so designated. Anubis, for instance, is still occasionally called Khentiamentiu in demotic texts of the Roman Period.[501]

How was the deceased's relationship with Osiris affected when that god absorbed Khentiamentiu and assumed his attributes? As far as one can judge, this did not have a very significant impact on their association. Osiris Khentiamentiu appears frequently as a donor in offering formulas on stelae during the period under consideration.[502] The primary boon that he is requested to grant is invocation offerings.[503] For this purpose he can be invoked alone or in conjunction with other deities.[504] Sometimes he is requested to provide offerings on the occasion of specific festivals.[505] Another boon Osiris Khentiamentiu is asked to grant is respiration, one of the key requisites for posthumous existence. This can be expressed in various ways, e.g. as 'breathing', 'the sweet breeze', 'the sweet breeze of the north wind', 'the breath of life', or 'the sweet breath of life'.[506] Ocasionally, respiration is requested in conjunction with other favours, e.g. the status of *akh* and power.[507] Reference is sometimes made to Osiris Khentiamentiu in offering formula wishes as well. In one instance, it is requested that Anubis grant offerings to the deceased in the presence of that god.[508]

In addresses to the living, it is sometimes said that Osiris Khentiamentiu will praise those who recite the offering formula for the owner of a tomb or stela, thus encouraging them to perform that pious act.[509] The deceased can also be described as *imakh* in the

[501] See Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, p. 39. For other deities who can be called Khentiamentiu, see C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 5 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), p. 784.

[502] See examples listed in Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos*, pp. 176–8.

[503] e.g. CG 20031, 20041, 20043, 20141, 20142, 20231, 20421, 20629, 20713, and 20729 (Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 1, pp. 40, 51, 166–7, and 251; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, pp. 16–17, 267, 338, and 359).

[504] e.g. CG 20088, 20102, and 20681 (Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 1, pp. 106 and 124; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, p. 308).

[505] e.g. CG 20338 (Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 1, p. 349).

[506] CG 20023, 20043, 20342, 20394, 20596, 20677, and 20761 (ibid., pp. 24, 53, 353, and 390; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, pp. 236, 304, and 394). For the use of such phrases as a dating criterion, see Ilin-Tomich, *ZÄS* 138 (2011), p. 21.

[507] CG 20149 (Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 1, p. 176).

[508] CG 20652 (Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, p. 286).

[509] e.g. CG 20017 and 20100 (Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 1, pp. 16–17 and 121–2).

presence of that deity.[510] Possession of this status ensures that they enjoy an association with him and receive the benefits that this connection confers upon the god's followers. In return, the deceased express their devotion to the deity by worshipping him,[511] giving him praise,[512] or kissing the earth before him.[513] In all of this, however, we find nothing that really distinguishes the relationship between Osiris Khentiamentiu and the dead from the relationship that they already enjoyed with Osiris.

If a precursor of the Abydene Osirian mysteries was celebrated for Khentiamentiu, and Osiris replaced that god as the main beneficiary of the rites, then the deceased's participation in them might have been facilitated by the merger of the two gods. On the other hand, the syncretism of Osiris and Sokar is not attested until the First Intermediate Period, yet the wishes in offering formulas show that the deceased already hoped and expected to receive offerings during the latter deity's festival as early as the fourth dynasty. Thus association with a deity who was linked by syncretism to Sokar was by no means a prerequisite for enjoying the benefits of his feast. It is notable that, in offering formulas and other texts of the period under consideration, Osiris Khentiamentiu, Wepwaut, Min-Harnakht, and the gods and goddesses who are in Abydos can be requested to grant the deceased the status of *imakh* in the following of Sokar, but Sokar-Osiris is not.[514] From this it would seem that there was no obvious advantage in invoking the latter to secure participation in Sokar's festival. The same is likely to have been true for any feast originally held in honour of Khentiamentiu. The evidence at our disposal suggests that Osiris's absorption of that deity was so total as to obviate any need for mediation of this kind.

In later periods of Egyptian history, the deceased are sometimes called *Wsi̯r ḫnty ỉmnty.w* NN, 'Osiris Khentiamentiu of NN', instead of *Wsi̯r* NN, as a way of marking their affiliation with the god of the dead. No examples of this locution are attested from the period under consideration. The earliest known instances of it date to the New Kingdom, specifically the eighteenth dynasty, while the majority stem from the Graeco-Roman Period.[515]

[510] CG 20332, 20379, 20520, 20686, and 20697 (ibid., pp. 345 and 378; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, pp. 117, 313, and 325).

[511] CG 20559 (ibid., p. 191). Cf. Végh in Neunert, Simon, Verbovsek, and Gabler (eds), *Text: Wissen—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung*, p. 264.

[512] Ibid., pp. 263–4.

[513] CG 20025 (Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 1, p. 31). Cf. Végh in Neunert, Simon, Verbovsek, and Gabler (eds), *Text: Wissen—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung*, p. 264.

[514] See e.g. CG 20089 and 20101 (Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 1, pp. 108–9 and 123); Ilin-Tomich, *ZÄS* 138 (2011), p. 23.

[515] See Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 325; P. Dorman, *The Tombs of Senenmut: The Architecture and Decoration of Tombs 71 and 353* (New York, 1991), p. 139 and plate 85; Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 47–9, 85, and 724; F. Gaudard and J. Johnson, 'Six Stone Mummy Labels in the Oriental Institute Museum', in H. Knuf, C. Leitz, and D. von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense: Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2010), p. 205.

4.14.3. Re

According to an Egyptian conception well attested in later periods, the sun god travels through the sky during the day, enters the underworld in the western horizon each evening, and passes through it during the night. At a certain point in his nocturnal journey he encounters and temporarily unites with Osiris.[516] This momentary union has a positive effect on both deities. Re subsequently emerges newly born at the eastern horizon each dawn to resume his journey through the sky, while Osiris remains in the underworld, his body rejuvenated as a result of his contact with the sun god.[517] This conception becomes especially prominent in the New Kingdom, when it is illustrated in the so-called guides to the underworld, texts and images that depict the sun's nocturnal course through that region, and in the Book of the Dead.[518] As a result, some identify it as a product of that time. Others, however, believe that the underworld guides were composed prior to the New Kingdom, in the Middle Kingdom or even earlier, although no copies of them older than the eighteenth dynasty have ever come to light. We will analyse the Egyptian conception of the nightly union of Re and Osiris in the underworld in greater detail in the following chapter. Here we will only consider the question of the date of its origin; in particular, whether or not it was already current during the period now under consideration.

Two types of argument have been advanced for the early dating of the underworld guides and, by extension, the ideas that they embody. One is linguistic. Some have argued that certain compositions display grammatical, orthographic, and phonological features characteristic of Old Egyptian. Therefore they must have been composed during the Old Kingdom.[519] The compositions in question include the Amduat, Book of Gates, Book of Caverns, Book of the Night, the Books of the Earth, and the Litany of the Sun. This has been disputed by others, however. Werning, in particular, has analysed the features in question in some detail.[520] He demonstrates that many of them, although first attested in sources of the Old Kingdom, were still in use during the New Kingdom, so that their presence in a text cannot be used to argue that it dates from an earlier period. Other features are not actually employed in the same way in the underworld guides as they were in the Old Kingdom, a fact which speaks against their

[516] The Egyptian verb used to describe this action is *ḫp*, the literal meaning of which is 'traverse, pass through'. Cf. M. Smith, 'P. Carlsberg 462: A Fragmentary Account of a Rebellion Against the Sun God', in P. Frandsen and K. Ryholt (eds), *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies* (Copenhagen, 2000), p. 106; J. Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth* (Atlanta, 2012), p. 328; S. Wiebach-Koepke, *Phänomenologie der Bewegungsabläufe im Jenseitskonzept der Unterweltbücher Amduat und Pfortenbuch und der liturgischen 'Sonnenlitanei'* 1 (Wiesbaden, 2003), pp. 52 and 155.

[517] See Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 95–6.

[518] For a good basic introduction to the underworld guides, see E. Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife* (Ithaca, 1999), pp. 26–151, with bibliographical notes on pp. 170–82.

[519] For arguments of this type, see literature cited in D. Werning, 'Linguistic Dating of the Netherworld Books Attested in the New Kingdom', in G. Moers, K. Widmaier, A. Giewekemeyer, A. Lümers, and R. Ernst (eds), *Dating Egyptian Literary Texts* (Hamburg, 2013), p. 238 note 2.

[520] See ibid., pp. 237–74.

having been composed at that time. Still other features clearly support a later date of composition rather than an earlier one for the texts in which they occur. According to Werning, while certain features of the texts in this corpus are consistent with a date of composition in the Middle Kingdom, there are others which point to a New Kingdom or Second Intermediate Period date for their redaction.[521] The former can be easily explained as reflecting the knowledge that learned Egyptians of the New Kingdom possessed of earlier stages of their language. We conclude from this that the linguistic arguments for dating the origin of the underworld guides to the period now under consideration or earlier are not compelling.

The other type of argument used to make this case is archaeological. Features of some monuments and artefacts dating to our period have been explained as two or three-dimensional representations of particular regions of the realm of the dead as they are described in the underworld guides. Therefore, it is claimed, they offer proof that those texts must already have existed at this time, even if no contemporary copies of them are extant. According to Rößler-Köhler, for instance, the interior plans of the pyramids of Sesostris II and some subsequent twelfth dynasty kings were designed to replicate the particular region of the underworld associated with the god Sokar, which is traversed by the sun god during the fourth and fifth hours of the night, as described and portrayed in the Amduat.[522]

Others think that the tomb of Sesostris III at South Abydos provides an architectural model of the sun's passage through the underworld as it is depicted in that text.[523] The subterranean element of this monument consists of two parts. In the first half, limestone masonry is used, in the second half, red quartzite. The first half is linear while the second half curves. Proponents of this view maintain that the first half represents Osiris and his burial, the second half, Re and his rebirth. The two halves meet at the burial chamber, which represents the space where Re encounters Osiris in the underworld. According to the Amduat, this takes place during the sixth hour of the night. Thus the underground portion of the complex, so the argument goes, is a magical simalcrum of the Amduat which mobilizes the efficacy of its text even though it is not inscribed there.

According to Roberson, the iconography of apotropaic knives dating to the late Middle Kingdom provides key evidence for the early existence of the conception of the underworld exemplified by the Amduat and related texts as well.[524] In one particular

[521] Ibid., p. 272.

[522] U. Rößler-Köhler, 'Königliche Vorstellungen zu Grab und Jenseits im Mittleren Reich, Teil I: Ein "Gottesbegräbnis" des Mittleren Reiches in königlichem Kontext: Amduat, 4. und 5. Stunde', in R. Gundlach and W. Seipel (eds), *Das frühe ägyptische Königtum: Akten des 2. Symposiums zur ägyptischen Königsideologie in Wien 24.–26.9.1997* (Wiesbaden, 1999), pp. 79–88. Cf. S. Quirke, *The Cult of Re: Sun-worship in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2001), p. 131.

[523] Silverman in Silverman, Simpson, and Wegner (eds), *Archaism and Innovation*, p. 78; Wegner, ibid., pp. 103–69; Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 19–22; Quirke, *The Cult of Re*, pp. 131–2.

[524] J. Roberson, 'The Early History of the "New Kingdom" Netherworld Iconography: A Late Middle Kingdom Apotropaic Wand Reconsidered', in Silverman, Simpson, and Wegner (eds), *Archaism and Innovation*, pp. 427–45.

example cited by him (BM EA 18175), the curved form of which he says represents the horizon, there is a recumbent lion above a serpent at each end, which he identifies with the god Ruti. In the middle there is a double-headed sphinx which he claims is the deity Aker in the deepest part of the underworld, the midpoint of the sun god's journey through that region. Below this is a scarab which he thinks represents the solar deity. According to him, the object as a whole depicts that deity's union with Osiris and subsequent rebirth as described in the Amduat and other New Kingdom underworld guides.

In all of these cases, the argument is rather speculative, since neither the monuments nor the objects are inscribed with texts that inform us what they are meant to represent. We have already seen the dangers of using written sources only attested in later periods as a basis for elucidating the symbolism of uninscribed burial spaces when discussing the subterranean chambers of pyramids of the fourth dynasty.[525] The same problems noted in that connection arise here as well. In both cases, the interpretation is essentially circular. Without any real proof, it is assumed that the design of a burial space has been influenced by a particular text, which is then used as evidence that the text in question already existed at that time. This in turn allows one to interpret the burial space as a three-dimensional representation of that text. The same objection applies to the interpretation of the BM apotropaic knife. The figures depicted on it are assumed to represent particular beings represented in the later underworld guides, even though no labels or other texts identify them as such. On the basis of this assumption it is argued that its decoration prefigures the concepts embodied in those compositions.

Some believe that, while the guides to the underworld themselves may not pre-date the New Kingdom, the idea that the sun entered that region each night and revivified Osiris there is much earlier. This view is based chiefly upon passages in the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts that it is thought may contain allusions to the nocturnal journey of Re through the netherworld and/or his temporary union with Osiris. One such passage occurs in the version of Pyramid Text Spell 357 preserved in the pyramid of Teti, where the beneficiary is told that Horus has become an *akh* before him in his name of 'horizon from which Re emerges' (*ỉḫ.t prr.t Rʿ ỉm*).[526] Similar statements occur in Spells 368[527] and 664B.[528] In Spell 364, the beneficiary himself is told to be an *akh* in his name of 'horizon from which Re emerges'.[529] It has been argued that this appellation alludes to the fact that the sun god comes forth reborn from Osiris as a result of his encounter with him in the underworld.[530] Likewise, a gloss in one version of Coffin

[525] See section 3.1.3.

[526] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 308 (§585a). Other versions substitute *ỉm=k* for *ỉm*.

[527] Ibid., p. 345 (§636c). Other versions substitute *ỉm=k* for the *ỉm=s* in the Teti version.

[528] R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts: Supplement of Hieroglyphic Texts* (Oxford, 1969), p. 23 (§1887b).

[529] Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 333 (§621b).

[530] W. Barta, 'Zum Wesen des Gottes Osiris nach Zeugnissen der älteren Totenliteratur', *ZÄS* 117 (1990), pp. 89–93; N. Billing, *Nut the Goddess of Life in Text and Iconography* (Uppsala, 2002), p. 116; J. Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott* (Berlin, 1969), p. 103.

Text Spell 335 says 'As for yesterday, it is Osiris. As for tomorrow, it is Re.'[531] This too has been interpreted as a reference to the sun god's rebirth at dawn after his encounter with Osiris during the previous night.[532]

A hymn to Osiris preserved on a stela of the thirteenth dynasty in the British Museum (BM EA 1367) states that Re sets in life to see him in the forms of the underworld.[533] If the reading *dwꜣ.t*, 'underworld', is correct there,[534] this could be an allusion to the nocturnal encounter between the sun god and Osiris, although nothing is said about an actual union of the two deities. In another hymn to Osiris preserved on two stelae in Rio de Janeiro, the god is told: *twt Rʿ ỉmy=k*, which could be translated 'May Re join you.'[535] This too could be understood as a reference to the nocturnal encounter between Re and Osiris. But the expression *twt m* need not mean 'join' in the specific sense of 'unite, merge with'. It can also mean 'be with, in the company of'. Compare P. Chester Beatty 5, verso, 2/7–8: 'It happens that a man who has people around him (*s ỉw=f twt m rmṯ.w*) is honoured on account of his offspring.'[536] Since the sentence immediately following the words *twt Rʿ ỉmy=k* states that Osiris is justified by or in the presence of Re, it is unlikely that those words refer to a merger between the two gods.

The two barks of the sun god, the day bark and the night bark, are mentioned in several Pyramid Text spells.[537] However, these make no reference to the sun's passage through the underworld or his encounter with Osiris there. There are also some references to the nocturnal voyage of the sun god in the Coffin Texts.[538] Once again, these contain no references to the solar deity's encounter with Osiris in the underworld. Conversely, some Coffin Text spells do allude to a meeting between the two gods, but this is said to take place in Mendes or some other city, not in the realm of the dead. Furthermore, Osiris is described as coming to Re, not vice versa.[539] Other spells, it has been argued, may allude to the encounter between these deities in more oblique terms.[540]

[531] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 193b (BH1Br). Most other versions have simply 'It is Osiris.' Two substitute 'As for yesterday, it is Osiris. As for tomorrow, it is Atum.'

[532] See e.g. S. Bickel, 'Die Jenseitsfahrt des Re nach Zeugen der Sargtexte', in A. Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel: Ägyptologische Beiträge für Erik Hornung aus seinem Schülerkreis* (Berlin, 1998), p. 49; Barta, *ZÄS* 117 (1990), p. 93; Forgeau, *Horus-fils-d'Isis: La jeunesse d'un dieu*, p. 154.

[533] E.A.W. Budge, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, &c., in the British Museum* 3 (London, 1912), plate 28, line 9.

[534] In the published facsimile, the word resembles *nỉw.t*, 'city'.

[535] Kitchen, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection in the National Museum, Rio de Janeiro*, p. 31 and plates 7–8, line 12.

[536] A. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Third Series: Chester Beatty Gift* (London, 1935), p. 50 and plate 27.

[537] For examples, see Hannig, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch I*, pp. 517 and 565. Cf. H. Altenmüller, 'Der Konvoi der Sonnenschiffe in den Pyramidentexten', *SAK* 32 (2004), pp. 26–8.

[538] See Bickel in Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel*, pp. 53–6; Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 198. One could add further examples to those cited by them, e.g. Coffin Text Spell 47, which refers to the westerners towing the solar bark with ropes (de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 209b).

[539] Bickel in Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel*, pp. 48–53.

[540] See e.g. Willems, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418)*, pp. 264 and 266–7. In my view his reading of the spells in question is excessively literal and too much influenced by later sources.

Bickel suggests that the parallelism of the two voyages of the sun god, through the sky and through the underworld respectively, may not have been fully worked out at this time. The concept of Re's nocturnal journey through the underworld was known, but this was not always viewed as constituting a cycle together with his journey through the sky as it was later.[541]

Whether one can trace the conception of the nightly union between Re and Osiris back this far or not, there can be no doubt of the importance of the sun god in Egyptian hopes and aspirations for the afterlife during the period under consideration. As early as the fifth dynasty, the deceased can be described as or express the wish to be *imakh* in the presence of Re.[542] Both the Pyramid Texts and contemporary non-royal sources provide clear evidence of the deceased's desire to travel to the sky, be an intimate of the solar deity, and join his following.[543] Likewise, the Coffin Texts envisage various forms of interaction between the deceased and the sun god,[544] as do the wishes in contemporary offering formulas.[545] As in the Old Kingdom sources, these include ascending to the sky, enjoying proximity to Re, and being admitted to the company of his followers.[546] Another aspiration of the deceased is to travel in the day and night barks of the solar deity.[547]

A few Pyramid Text spells mention Osiris and Re together,[548] as do some in the Coffin Texts.[549] In the latter corpus, Osiris can be called the deputy or successor of Re,[550] and occasionally different versions of the same spell substitute the name of one deity for the other.[551] In hymns of the Middle Kingdom addressed to Osiris, Re is said to do various things for that god. These include praising him,[552] proclaiming or being present at his justification,[553] instilling fear of him among humans, gods, *akhs*, and the dead,[554] and presenting him with the *atef*-crown.[555]

[541] Bickel in Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel*, p. 56.
[542] See sections 2.4.4 and 2.4.5. [543] See sections 3.9.2 and 3.9.3.
[544] For the different roles played by Re in the Coffin Texts, see Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten*, pp. 101–20.
[545] See e.g. Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 38, 47, 50, 56, and 66.
[546] Cf. the title of Spell 175: 'Spell for going forth to the sky, to the place where Re is' (de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 61a).
[547] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 50 and 63; Bickel in Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel*, pp. 55–6.
[548] See, for instance, Spells 305 and 486: Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 1, p. 243 (§472a); Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, pp. 82–3 (§1044a–c).
[549] See Bickel in Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel*, pp. 49–50; de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 54i–j; de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 357a–e; de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5, p. 379e.
[550] e.g. Spell 313 (de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 93m). Cf. Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten*, p. 46.
[551] Ibid., p. 47.
[552] See Franke in Meyer (ed.), *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World*, pp. 100–2.
[553] Kitchen, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection in the National Museum, Rio de Janeiro*, p. 31, plates 7–8, line 13, and 9–10, line 1.
[554] D. Franke, *Egyptian Stelae in the British Museum from the 13th to 17th Dynasties* 1 (London, 2013), p. 113 and plate 25, line 6.
[555] Budge, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, &c., in the British Museum* 3, plate 28, line 10. Cf. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 87c–d.

Only rarely do these sources envisage the deceased as interacting with the two gods in conjunction, however. This is not surprising, since Re and Osiris are counterparts who co-exist in two different spheres, one having dominion in the sky, the other in the underworld. The separation of their respective domains is reflected in the rubric of Coffin Text Spell 1130, which states: 'As for any man who knows this utterance, he will be like Re in the eastern sky and like Osiris within the underworld.'[556] Some texts of our period do refer to Osiris (or Osiris Khentiamentiu) as 'the great god and lord of the sky'.[557] Gabolde and el-Noubi think that these epithets identify him with the solar deity during his nocturnal voyage across the celestial expanse,[558] but they could simply allude to his aspect as the moon without any implied identification with the sun god.[559] Here too, there is no real overlap between the functions of Osiris and Re, since the former serves as the nocturnal counterpart, the 'deputy', of the latter. The only difference is that in this instance the boundary demarcating their respective spheres of activity is temporal rather than spatial.

As noted in section 4.10.4.2, one version of Coffin Text Spell 45 inserts a sun determinative (Gardiner Sign-List N5) in a writing of the initial element of the locution *Wsi̯r* NN. It has been suggested that the sign was inserted to reflect the deceased's 'solarization', since the spell states that he appears as Re and will be given life in the west like that god every day.[560] But this could simply be a scribal error, since the orthography of *Wsi̯r* with sun determinative occurs nowhere else in this or any other version of the spell.[561] Spell 1046 makes reference to the followers of Osiris (*šms.w n Wsi̯r*).[562] However, one version (B4L), preserved on the outer coffin of a man called Sen from el-Bersha, now in the British Museum, inserts the sun hieroglyph before the name of the god.[563] This could be interpreted to mean either 'the followers of Re-Osiris' or 'the followers of Re and Osiris'. If the former is correct, then one has here an early example of syncretism between the two gods. But some think that the insertion of the sun sign could be a scribal error, since such a combination is unattested elsewhere at this time.[564]

[556] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 471c–d. Cf. ibid., p. 262f–g. Compare also Spell 19 which contrasts 'Re who is in the sky' and 'Osiris the great god who is in Abydos' (de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 55d–e). Likewise, the text on the stela of the overseer of the treasury Mentuhotep from Abydos (CG 20539) makes a clear distinction between 'the great god, lord of the sky' (= Re) and 'the great god, lord of Abydos' (= Osiris). See Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember*, pp. 168 and 179.

[557] See Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos*, pp. 174–6 and 178.

[558] L. Gabolde and M. el-Noubi, 'Stèle de Gegi (PPI) avec une invocation d'offrande au "furieux"(?) dans les magasins de Louxor', *RdE* 51 (2000), p. 264 note i.

[559] Compare R. Leprohon, *Stelae 2: The New Kingdom to the Coptic Period*, Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 3 (Mainz am Rhein, 1991), pp. 89 and 91, where the moon (*pꜣ i͗ḥ*) is called 'great god and lord of the sky'. For Osiris as the moon in our period, cf. Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten*, p. 43, although none of the examples cited by her identifies the god by name with this celestial body.

[560] Ibid., p. 44. [561] See discussion in section 4.10.4.2.

[562] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 298a.

[563] For this coffin, see ibid., p. ix (BM EA 38041).

[564] Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten*, p. 43.

Even in texts concerned with the deceased's participation in the sun god's nocturnal journey through the underworld, their interaction with Re and Osiris in conjunction is rarely mentioned. In Coffin Spell 317, for example, the deceased asserts his identity with the god of the inundation and claims 'My seat is prominent in the bark of Re in the lower underworld.'[565] In Spell 107 he asserts his identity with Re and Horus and says the lower underworld will be opened for him.[566] One exception to this is Spell 1068, where the deceased greets Re and asks him to make Osiris gracious to him, saying that those in the *imhet*-cavern will worship the sun god and those in the underworld glorify him, giving him praise when he comes in peace.[567] The context would appear to be Re's arrival in the realm of the dead after setting in the western horizon. This shows that, although the sky is his normal sphere, he can exercise authority in the underworld as well. We will examine the nature of this authority in greater detail in the following chapter. In this connection, it is interesting to note that two of the wishes comprising the Abydos Formula are that the deceased might ply the oars in the night bark of the sun god and sail in his day bark.[568] The fact that such wishes were incorporated in a text which is otherwise exclusively Osirian in character shows the importance attached to interaction with the solar deity by the creators of the formula, even if it was not directly linked to interaction with Osiris.

4.14.4. Hathor

As early as the Old Kingdom, there is considerable evidence that the dead hoped to interact with the goddess Hathor in the afterlife. Private offering formulas of the fifth and sixth dynasties describe deceased women as *imakh* before that deity.[569] In formulas of the sixth dynasty, she appears as a donor as well.[570] Likewise in offering formulas of the First Intermediate Period, the deceased are described as *imakh* before the goddess.[571] One of the wishes in formulas of the eleventh dynasty is that a hand be extended to the deceased with offerings that came forth before Hathor.[572] In those of the twelfth dynasty, she is attested as a donor.[573] A number of Coffin Text spells allude to interaction between the deceased and Hathor in ritual contexts as well. In particular, she is said to anoint and clothe them.[574]

Some Coffin Text spells make specific reference to the following or retinue of the goddess.[575] In Spell 485, for instance, the deceased asserts 'I am in the following of

[565] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 118d.
[566] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, p. 119i.
[567] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, pp. 329a–330c. Cf. Bickel in Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel*, pp. 55–6.
[568] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom*, pp. 86–7.
[569] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 19 and 32.
[570] Ibid., p. 25. [571] Ibid., pp. 42 and 51. [572] Ibid., p. 50. [573] Ibid., p. 56.
[574] See Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten*, pp. 135–6.
[575] Ibid., p. 135; de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 137f.

Hathor.'[576] We can be certain that this claim reflects a genuine Egyptian aspiration for the afterlife and is not simply made for ritual purposes, since joining the retinue of the goddess is mentioned as a goal in paratextual sources like spell titles and rubrics as well. Thus the title of Spell 710 is 'Being in the following of Hathor'.[577] The imperfectly preserved title of Spell 543 indicates that its purpose was to allow the deceased to be in Hathor's following as well.[578] The rubric of Spell 110, likewise damaged, indicates that it was supposed to allow the beneficiary to do something in the horizon in the goddess's retinue.[579] The fact that the venue of this activity is said to be the horizon may help to explain why Hathor's following is sometimes mentioned in conjunction with that of Re. In Spell 500, for instance, the deceased tells his *ba*, *akh*, shade, and magic to sit at the head of the great ones with prominent places in the horizon in the followings of Re and Hathor for ever and ever.[580] In Spell 497, he asks the gods in the sky, earth, water, and horizon to make a way for his *ba*, *akh*, and shade in the followings of Re and Hathor for ever and ever.[581]

In later periods of Egyptian history, Hathor becomes something of a female counterpart to Osiris. Like him, she can be described as ruler of the land of the dead. As a result, deceased women are sometimes called *Ḥ.t-Ḥr* NN or *Ḥ.t-Ḥr n* NN, 'Hathor of NN', rather than 'Osiris of NN'.[582] The earliest known example where a woman is so designated is in the text on a statue dating to the reign of Osorkon III of the twenty-third dynasty.[583] The designation 'Hathor of NN' highlighted the status of women as devotees of Hathor in the afterlife.[584] It reflects a propensity for using gender as a basis for classification and association: males are identified as followers of a male deity and females as followers of a female deity. This practice had a long history in Egypt, and can be paralleled in numerous Egyptian sources of earlier date.[585]

While no examples of *Ḥ.t-Ḥr* NN or *Ḥ.t-Ḥr n* NN are attested during the period under consideration, two female figures on a model funerary boat of the Middle Kingdom are labelled *ỉst* NN *mỉ.t-ḫrw* and *Nb.t-ḥ.t* NN *mỉ.t-ḫrw* respectively. They are shown clasping the head and feet of the mummy being transported in the vessel.[586] Since

[576] Ibid., p. 62e. [577] Ibid., p. 341h. [578] Ibid., p. 138d.
[579] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 2, p. 124i.
[580] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 84a–b. [581] Ibid., pp. 78f–79d.
[582] Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 325. For additional references, see R. Brech, *Spätägyptische Särge aus Achmim: Eine typologische und chronologische Studie* (Gladbeck, 2008), p. 378; Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 160, 537, 582, and 597–8; J. Moje, 'Weitere demotische und bilingue Stelen aus Tell Nebesheh und aus Kom el-Hisn', *JEA* 97 (2011), pp. 179–81; A. Migahid, 'Fünfunddreißig demotisch beschriftete Mumienleinen aus dem British Museum', *BIFAO* 105 (2005), p. 147. See also section 6.6.8.
[583] M. Smith, 'New References to the Deceased as *Wsỉr n NN* from the Third Intermediate Period and the Earliest Reference to a Deceased Woman as *Ḥ.t-Ḥr NN*', *RdE* 63 (2012), pp. 194–5.
[584] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 7; Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 335.
[585] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 8, and references cited there.
[586] H. Fischer, *Varia* (New York, 1976), pp. 42–3 and plate 13; W. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt* 1 (New York, 1953), pp. 272–3. For discussion, see Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507*, p. 130 note 726.

texts in subsequent periods of Egyptian history make reference to a corporation of deceased women that follows Isis and Nephthys,[587] it is tempting to interpret this as early evidence for such a conception, with *ỉst* NN and *Nb.t-ḥ.t* NN as analogues of the later *Ḥ.t-Ḥr* NN. The use of the epithet *mỉ.t-ḫrw*, 'justified', after the names of the women depicted supports the idea that they are deceased, but since this epithet was sometimes applied proleptically,[588] we cannot be absolutely certain that they are portrayed as such here. Two similar figures on another model funerary boat of the same period are labelled simply 'Isis' and 'Nephthys'.[589]

The introduction of the locution 'Hathor of NN' did not mean that women ceased to be designated as 'Osiris of NN'. Like men, they could still be called this until belief in the Osirian afterlife came to an end. Rather, the two locutions were employed concurrently. A few texts refer to their female beneficiaries as 'Osiris of NN' in some passages and 'Hathor of NN' in others. On a stela of the Roman Period now in the British Museum (BM EA 8486), the female owner is called 'Hathor of NN' in the label in the lunette and 'Osiris of NN' in the text of the offering formula below.[590] Since these locutions identified the deceased as members of a particular deity's following, and they could be affiliated with more than one divinity,[591] the two statuses were not mutually exclusive. Deceased women could also be referred to with a compound designation, 'Osiris Hathor of NN', attested from the Ptolemaic Period onward, which marked them as followers of both deities.[592] How a woman was designated in a particular text or text passage depended upon which of her affiliations the writer wished to foreground.

The developments outlined above can be traced back at least as early as the period now under consideration. The idea that men might adhere to the cultic sphere of Osiris in the afterlife and women to that of Hathor is already attested in the inscription on a statue of a man and his wife dating to the eleventh dynasty, which describes him as being *imakh* before the god and her as enjoying that status before the goddess.[593] A vertical column of text on the right side of a false door of the late Old Kingdom belonging to a woman called *Sỉ.t-ỉy-ṯnw*, now in Cairo, identifies her as *imakh* before Hathor.[594] In the inscription above the scene in the central panel, however, she is called *Wsỉr Sỉ.t-ỉy-ṯnw ḥss.t Ḥ.t-Ḥr*, 'Osiris of *Sỉ.t-ỉy-ṯnw*, praised by Hathor', thus marking her affiliation with both deities in conjunction.[595] I suggest that this is a precursor of the later locution 'Osiris Hathor of NN'.

As we have seen, the titles and rubrics of some Coffin Text spells make reference to the following or retinue of Hathor. It is of interest that whereas in later periods it is

[587] See section 6.6.8.2. [588] See section 4.15.4.

[589] G. Steindorff, *Grabfunde des Mittleren Reichs in den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin 1: Das Grab des Mentuhotep* (Berlin, 1896), p. 39 and plate 9.

[590] M. Bierbrier, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae* 11 (London, 1987), p. 45 and plates 94–5.

[591] Compare the Coffin Text spells cited above in which the deceased seeks admission to the followings of Re and Hathor. Cf. Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 335.

[592] Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 88.

[593] Petrie, *Dendereh 1898*, p. 26 with plates 15 and 21; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 8.

[594] Fischer, *ZÄS* 90 (1963), p. 37 and plate 6. [595] Ibid., p. 36 and plate 6.

normally women who are said to be followers of the goddess, in our period both males and females aspired to join her devotees in the afterlife. Spells 331 and 612 have the title 'Coming into being as Hathor'.[596] As we saw earlier in this chapter, the purpose of spells with such titles was to endow the deceased with a form or attributes associated with a particular divinity. These constituted an outward sign, a visible mark, of their status as followers or adherents of the divinity in question.[597] It is interesting to note that the two spells just mentioned appear on coffins inscribed for both men and women, which demonstrates once again that membership in Hathor's retinue was not limited to those of a particular gender.

The use of a form or attribute connected with Hathor to mark association with that goddess may also be found in some representations of living people. A scene on a birth brick of Middle Kingdom date found at Abydos depicts a mother giving birth to a child with the help of two female attendants.[598] This group is flanked by a pair of standards surmounted by heads of Hathor with grey skin and blue hair. The mother and her two attendants, although not the child, are depicted with the same colour skin and hair as the goddess has on the standards. Wegner suggests that the purpose of these attributes is to identify the three of them magically as manifestations of Hathor.[599] In support of his view, he cites a spell for hastening childbirth preserved in a New Kingdom magical text, P. Leiden I 348.[600] Although the grammatical interpretation of the key sentence in the utterance is problematic,[601] it appears to say that Hathor herself is the one giving birth, thus identifying the woman for whose benefit the spell is recited with the goddess in question.[602]

Identifying a person or thing with a deity was an important technique in ancient Egyptian ritual practice. As we saw in section 3.8.1, it was a means to an end, not an end in itself. It was designed to confer a power, status, or attribute associated with a particular deity upon the one thus identified in order to help achieve that end. One may compare, for example, the ritual preserved in P. Cairo 58027 in which the guardian deities associated with each hour of the night are enjoined to protect the king because he is one of them. To ensure that they do so, in each successive hour the ruler is said to be in the form (*ḫpr.w*) of a different god. The divinities with whom he is identified

[596] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 172a; de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 225e.

[597] See section 4.9.1; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 614–15; Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, pp. 334–6.

[598] See J. Wegner, 'A Decorated Birth-Brick from South Abydos: New Evidence on Childbirth and Birth Magic in the Middle Kingdom', in Silverman, Simpson, and Wegner (eds), *Archaism and Innovation*, pp. 447–96, with illustrations of this scene on pp. 449–51.

[599] Ibid., p. 457.

[600] P. Leiden I 348 recto, 13/9–11. See J. Borghouts, *The Magical Texts of Papyrus Leiden I 348* (Leiden, 1971), p. 28 and plates 13 and 30.

[601] See comments of Borghouts, ibid., p. 141 note 332. Could *i-di* there be the Late Egyptian emphatic future and the following *s* + seated woman sign a writing of the third person singular feminine dependent pronoun?

[602] So Wegner in Silverman, Simpson, and Wegner (eds), *Archaism and Innovation*, p. 458, although he wrongly says that the spell is to be recited by the woman. The text (recto 13/10–11) states explicitly that it should be recited for her (scil. by someone else).

include Geb, Nefertem-Re-Harakhti, Horus, and Amun-Re.[603] Such identifications were ritually contingent, not socially permanent. They were valid only within the temporal framework of the rite in which they were uttered. In the case of the spell in the Leiden papyrus, if it has been interpreted correctly, the aim would have been to ensure that a woman in labour delivered her child safely and swiftly by identifying her with a goddess noted for her expertise as a midwife who was herself a divine mother.[604]

It is possible that the scene on the birth brick provides a visual counterpart to the spell, and was intended to achieve the same magical end, as Wegner suggests. It is curious, however, that not only the woman giving birth but her two attendants as well have the same colour skin and hair as the Hathor standards. This leads me to suggest a different interpretation. The purpose of these attributes could be to signify that all three women are within the goddess's sphere of protection, that she is influencing their actions and exercising oversight of the birth process. Her presence in a supervisory capacity is signalled by the two standards with Hathor heads. The women are 'Hathors' during the period circumscribed by the delivery, but in the same sense that the deceased women in the goddess's retinue can be designated as such.[605] Thus there is no real identification here. Good analogues are the scenes on a block statue of the twenty-third dynasty in Cairo and a mummy cartonnage of the Ptolemaic Period in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Budapest cited in section 4.9.1. In both, the deceased is shown with Osirian attributes to signal the fact that he is one of the god's adherents, but clearly labelled as 'Osiris of NN' to distinguish him from the deity whom he follows.[606]

4.15. BECOMING A FOLLOWER OF OSIRIS

4.15.1. Joining the following of Osiris in the Old Kingdom

Egyptian sources of the Old Kingdom inform us in considerable detail about the benefits that the deceased derived from their association with Osiris as devotees or followers. These include immortality, social reintegration in the afterlife, and provision of material needs.[607] But how were the dead supposed to join the deity's retinue in order to enjoy them? The texts at our disposal are less informative on this subject, but do nevertheless provide some indications. There is no single prescription or programmatic statement setting out what had to be done and by whom, so one has to assemble the relevant data from a number of disparate sources.

[603] See A. Pries, *Das nächtliche Stundenritual zum Schutz des Königs und verwandte Kompositionen* (Heidelberg, 2009).
[604] See Wegner in Silverman, Simpson, and Wegner (eds), *Archaism and Innovation*, pp. 457–63.
[605] See Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 335.
[606] See Legrain, *CGC: Statues et statuettes de rois et de particuliers* 3, plate 31; Kákosy, *ZÄS* 97 (1971), p. 100, Abb. 3.
[607] See section 3.6.

At least two different ways of joining the retinue of Osiris and obtaining the boons conferred by membership in it were envisaged during the Old Kingdom. One was the recitation of ritual utterances. Some of these were said by priests or others for the benefit of the deceased during the mortuary ceremonies or afterwards. Others were supposed to be recited by the deceased themselves. Compare the statement appended to Pyramid Text Spell 561B which promises that whoever worships Osiris while reciting the spell will live for ever.[608] The other way was through the action of a divinity, which could itself be instigated by the prayers of the living. In an offering formula inscribed on an architrave from the fifth dynasty tomb of Ptahshepses, for instance, Khentiamentiu is asked to let the deceased traverse the beautiful ways on which the *imakhu* go into the presence of the great god, who in this instance is clearly identifiable as Osiris.[609] But there may have been another way in addition to these two. The deceased's admission to the following of the god and enjoyment of the benefits resulting from that association might have been conditioned by their conduct in the world of the living. However, the evidence for this is less certain.

It is not clear whether the concept of a general judgement of the dead existed during the Old Kingdom. As we saw in section 2.5, a number of sources of this period refer to the possibility that an individual might become involved in litigation in the next world, but in most cases this seems to relate to a specific accusation or allegation of wrongdoing rather than an assessment of one's conduct as a whole. Nevertheless, some autobiographical inscriptions in tombs of this time state that the tomb owner refrained from doing evil because he wished that it might go well with him in the presence of the great god or because he wished to be *imakh* in the presence of the great god for ever. This seems to connect acquisition of that status in the afterlife with adherence to some sort of ethical code in this one.

In an offering formula from the mid- or late fifth dynasty tomb of Werirenptah at Saqqara, the wish is expressed that the tomb owner might travel upon the beautiful roads on which the *imakhu* and the righteous (*mꜣʿ-ḫrw*) travel and dwell in peace in the presence of the great god.[610] The fact that the righteous are mentioned in parallel with the *imakhu* in this text, and like them are said to enjoy proximity to the great god, provides further support for the idea that association with the deity was dependent to some extent on past behaviour. The theme of justification figures prominently in some private offering formula wishes as well. Likewise, a number of Pyramid Text spells speak of the deceased king's justification, often in contexts that associate it with ascent to the sky and intimacy with the sun god.[611] However, none of these texts links the righteous or justification specifically with Osiris.

In some Old Kingdom sources, that god is called 'lord of Maat', which could be interpreted to mean that he had charge of ensuring that good was rewarded and evil

[608] Section 3.9.1.

[609] Section 3.6.1. Elsewhere in the same architrave inscription, two lines above, Osiris is said to be 'the great god and lord of Maat'.

[610] See section 2.5.

[611] See section 3.9.3.

punished.[612] But the epithet could have had other meanings as well, e.g. that Osiris was found to be the innocent party in the dispute between him and Seth.[613] One wish preserved in an offering formula on a false door of sixth dynasty date is that the deceased be righteous (*mꜣʿ*) in the heart of Osiris.[614] This could imply that the god played some part in assessing an individual's conduct. At the very least it indicates a desire to be regarded favourably by him. A decree promulgated by the ephemeral late Old Kingdom ruler Demedjibtawi threatens that those who violate its provisions will be subject to the accusations 'of the king, Osiris, and their local god' (*nw nswt Wsi̯r nw nṯr=sn ni̯w.ty*).[615] But the fact remains that in most sources of this period, the deceased's justification is linked with Re or other deities, not Osiris. In texts of later periods, the dead only attain the status of *mꜣʿ-ḫrw* after they have been judged in a tribunal before Osiris and found to have led a virtuous life. As a result they are admitted into the following of that deity. There is nothing to suggest that such a conception existed as early as the Old Kingdom, apart from the few rather equivocal examples just cited.

4.15.2. Joining the following of Osiris in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom

The first two ways of joining the retinue of Osiris identified in section 4.15.1 remained important during the period under consideration now as well. The titles and colophons of several Coffin Text spells indicate that their purpose was to permit the beneficiary to enjoy proximity to the god in one form or another. The privileges that these utterances are supposed to confer include being among the followers of Osiris, entering his presence or entering his house, being in the midst of those who eat the god's bread, eating bread at his side, seeing him daily, and being with him for eternity and never perishing.[616] Likewise, the wishes in offering formulas of this period place considerable emphasis upon the deceased's desire for association and interaction with Osiris. In fact, wishes of this type occur with far greater frequency now than they did in the Old Kingdom.[617]

Another significant development is that the wishes are concerned not only with the deceased's relationship with Osiris in the underworld, but on earth as well, especially at Abydos, which becomes an important locale for interaction between the god and his

[612] For examples, see section 3.6.1; Sethe, *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte* 2, p. 323 (§1520a). Note that the claim in B. Mathieu, 'Mais qui est donc Osiris? Ou la politique sous le linceul de la religion', *ENiM* 3 (2010), p. 86, that only the king held this title prior to Osiris is incorrect. It is already attributed to Re-Harakhti in the solar temple of Niuserre. See H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-Woser-Re (Rathures) 3: Die grosse Festdarstellung* (Leipzig, 1928), p. 41 and plates 20–1.

[613] R. Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten* (Wiesbaden, 1970), p. 86.

[614] See section 3.6.1.

[615] See Goedicke, *Königliche Dokumente aus dem Alten Reich*, pp. 214–15 and 220–1 with Abb. 28. The absence of the genitival adjective *nw* before *Wsi̯r* there would also permit the translation 'of king Osiris and their local god'.

[616] See section 4.9.1. [617] Ibid.

followers. The wishes comprising the Abydos Formula reflect this with particular clarity.[618] Hymns are also attested in which the deceased address Osiris directly and ask him to accept them among his followers.[619] Our period differs from the Old Kingdom, however, in one major respect. Whereas in the latter, evidence for a general judgement of the dead is sparse and equivocal, it now becomes much more abundant, and Osiris plays an increasingly important part in the legal process. There is also greater emphasis upon virtuous conduct as a prerequisite for association with the god.

4.15.3. Justification as a prerequisite for joining the following of Osiris

One important source of information for the concept of a general judgement of the dead during the period under consideration is didactic literature, in particular the Instruction of Ptahhotep and the Instruction for Merikare. Both express the view that wrongdoing is always punished in the end. The latter explicitly refers to a court in the afterlife where the deeds of an individual's entire lifetime are assessed and he is punished or rewarded as appropriate.[620] The former states 'Great is Maat, lasting is its efficacy. It has not been disturbed since the time of Osiris.'[621] Some interpret 'since the time of Osiris' here to mean since the time when Osiris was placed in charge of administering justice.[622] In this case, we would have a clear reference to the god as an arbiter of legal affairs. I wonder, however, whether the sense of this maxim is not rather that Maat has been undisturbed since the occasion when Seth violated it by murdering Osiris. If so, then it cannot be used as evidence for the latter god's involvement in judging right and wrong.

Justification is sometimes named as a boon sought in offering formulas of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth dynasties.[623] One of the wishes in the Abydos Formula (no. 19) is that the deceased reach the tribunal of Osiris.[624] In a text inscribed on a stela belonging to an official called Sesostris from Abydos, it is requested that the stela owner be given a beautiful tomb or offering chapel of justification (*mʿḥʿ.t nfr.t n.t mɜʿ-ḫrw*).[625] Further evidence for the growing importance of this concept is the fact that the epithet 'justified' begins to be written after the names of deceased individuals at this time, the

[618] Sections 4.12.2–4. [619] Section 4.9.5.
[620] See Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, pp. 1–2.
[621] P. Prisse, 6/5. See Z. Žába, *Les maximes de Ptahhotep* (Prague, 1956), p. 23.
[622] e.g. Mathieu, *ENiM* 3 (2010), p. 86.
[623] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 49, 59, 60, and 65; J. Clère, 'Un passage de la stèle du général Antef (Glyptothèque Ny Carlsberg, Copenhague)', *BIFAO* 30 (1930), p. 425; Végh in Neunert, Simon, Verbovsek, and Gabler (eds), *Text: Wissen—Wirkung—Wahrnehmung*, p. 270.
[624] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom*, pp. 86–7.
[625] Frankfort, *JEA* 14 (1928), pp. 240–1 and plate 20. According to Ilin-Tomich, *ZÄS* 138 (2011), p. 25, this stela actually dates to the thirteenth dynasty, and not the twelfth as Frankfort and others have said.

earliest examples occurring in the late eleventh dynasty.[626] The model for this is Osiris himself, to whose name this epithet begins to be attached around the same time.[627]

Words meaning 'judge', 'justify', and 'justification' occur frequently in the Coffin Texts.[628] The titles of some spells make it clear that they are intended to vindicate the beneficiary in a court or tribunal. The utterances in question include 1, 4, 7, 149, 225, 345, 618, and 842.[629] A few spell titles make specific reference to the deceased's justification before Osiris, for example, that of Spell 343, one of whose aims is to secure 'justification in the presence of Osiris the bull of the west'.[630] Several Coffin Text spells refer to a tribunal of Osiris or Khentiamentiu, while Spell 409 attributes no less than seven tribunals to that god.[631] It is not always clear, however, whether the legal proceedings that take place in these venues entail the assessment of an individual's conduct as a whole or simply adjucation of a dispute involving a specific foe or foes.[632] One instance where the former seems to be envisaged is Spell 242, where the deceased asserts 'Justification has been given to me concerning what I used to do (*irr=i*) in the presence of Osiris the bull of the west',[633] since there is no reference to an enemy or other opponent in that utterance.

In some Coffin Text spells, justification appears to be a prerequisite for enjoying proximity to Osiris in the afterlife. Thus in Spell 605 the beneficiary states 'Today I have come to the place where Osiris is, for I am justified.'[634] The link between the two is confirmed by contemporary sources outside the Coffin Text corpus. In the inscription on the stela of a man called Semti from Abydos, for instance, he says that he did not do wrong but rather gladdened the god with Maat so that he might be present in the form of a *ba* and transfigured spirit in the necropolis, the mistress of eternity, ply the oar, descend to the *neshmet*-bark, and kiss the earth for Wepwaut.[635] Here we have an explicit statement that the stela owner lived a virtuous life so that he could return to this world and participate in the Abydene mysteries of Osiris after his death.

Likewise, the inscription on the stela of Sehetepibre from Abydos states that he built a chapel for himself there and performed other pious acts for Osiris so that he could be 'in the following of the god, transfigured and mighty at the terrace of the lord of Abydos'.[636]

[626] See Leahy, *JEA* 75 (1989), p. 56 note 58; Willems, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects of Egyptian Funerary Culture*, p. 35 note 114.

[627] See A. Tillier, 'À propos de *nṯr nfr* comme épithète divine: Contribution à l'étude d'Osiris-roi au Moyen Empire', *RdE* 62 (2011), p. 163.

[628] See lists of passages where they occur in Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, pp. 149–58.

[629] See ibid., pp. 152–8.

[630] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 348b.

[631] Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, pp. 87–8.

[632] Ibid., p. 111.

[633] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3, p. 328a.

[634] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 218k–l.

[635] Sethe, *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht*, p. 75, lines 21–3; Simpson, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, plate 61; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom*, pp. 96–8; Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember*, pp. 182 and 184.

[636] Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 2, p. 148; Lange and Schäfer, *CGC: Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs im Museum von Kairo* 4, plate 40; Simpson, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, p. 11; Landgráfová, *It Is My Good Name That You Should Remember*, pp. 220 and 223.

The acts in question include supervising repairs on the sacred bark of Osiris, conducting the mysteries of the deity, and participating in them as the priest responsible for adorning the god's image. The same claim is made in another twelfth dynasty stela from Abydos belonging to the overseer of the treasury Mentuhotep.[637]

What is of particular interest in these last two examples is the fact that the stela owners appear to base their hopes for posthumous participation in the mysteries of Osiris at least partly on the fact that they were active participants in them during their lifetimes. The idea that cultic service in this life could be carried over into the next one is attested in a number of other Egyptian sources.[638] It may also be implicit in the statement from Pyramid Text Spell 561B quoted in section 4.15.1 to the effect that whoever worships Osiris will live for ever. But performing cultic service for the god in this life was conducive to justification in the hereafter as well. In Coffin Text Spell 409, the deceased asks the *neshmet*-bark, its occupants, and the individual parts of that vessel to justify him. To persuade them to do so, he has to demonstrate that he knows them, their names, and their forms.[639] Here what is crucial for the deceased's justification is that he display intimate familiarity with the sacred vessel of Osiris. Obviously those most familiar with the *neshmet*-bark and its equipment would be the devotees who had accompanied it in the procession to Poker during their lifetimes.

In later periods of Egyptian history, the iconography of scenes depicting the judgement of the dead becomes fairly standardized, especially in vignettes accompanying Spell 125 of the Book of the Dead.[640] The venue for the judgement is a place called the hall of the two truths. There the hearts of the deceased are weighed against Maat in a balance to determine whether they have lived virtuous or wicked lives. The weighing process is conducted by Anubis and Horus, with Thoth waiting to record the result. Osiris presides over the judgement, assisted by a group of forty-two gods representing the forty-two nomes of Egypt. A ferocious monster of hybrid form waits to devour those who fail the test because of their wrongdoing on earth.

Only a few elements of this picture can be identified in sources of the period under consideration. The two truths are mentioned in the Coffin Texts, and in the Pyramid Texts as well, but there are no references to the hall named after them. In the Coffin Texts, they are connected with Re rather than Osiris.[641] A number of Coffin Text spells mention the heart of the deceased, and some are specifically intended to prevent it from opposing them in the tribunals of the next world.[642] But nowhere is it ever said to be weighed in a balance. The forty-two assessors of Osiris do not appear in the Coffin Texts. Perhaps a forerunner of this group is to be recognized in the 'lords of Maat, the tribunal which is around Osiris' who figure in Spell 335,[643] or one of the other groups

[637] Ibid., pp. 167 and 171.
[638] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 63, and literature cited there; Hays in Nyord and Kjølby (eds), *'Being in Ancient Egypt'*, pp. 23–4.
[639] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5, pp. 227–33.
[640] See C. Seeber, *Untersuchungen zur Darstellung des Totengerichts im Alten Ägypten* (Munich, 1976).
[641] Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, pp. 89–90.
[642] Ibid., pp. 51–5.
[643] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 254a.

of judges who are mentioned in connection with the god.[644] Nor is there any trace of the monster who devours the damned, although there are other fierce beings who pose a threat to the deceased.[645]

References to a balance do occur in a few Coffin Text spells, but with one exception, none of the gods associated with this device in Book of the Dead Spell 125 are said to be involved with its operation.[646] The exception is Coffin Text Spell 47, where the deceased is told, 'You will weigh with the balance like Thoth.'[647] Here, allusion is made to the god, not in his later role as recorder of the outcome of the weighing, but as the one who actually performs it. In Spell 44, the deceased is told that his sin will be erased by those who weigh in the balance on the day of reckoning characters.[648] Spell 335 refers to an inimical deity with mysterious form, whose eyebrows are said to be the arms of the balance.[649] Spell 691 invokes a group of seven other beings who are said to support the balance on the night of putting the sound eye in order, who cut off heads and steal hearts.[650] But apart from Thoth, the only named deity who is associated with the balance is the sun god. Spell 452 says that the deceased is the balance with which Re weights Maat.[651]

This last passage leads us to consider the role of the solar deity as judge of the dead during the period under consideration. In fact, he is just as important in this sphere as Osiris. The major difference is that the latter was justified in a tribunal himself, a process later re-enacted in the Osiris mysteries, thereby providing a model which the deceased hoped to emulate. A number of Coffin Text spells associate Re with the justification of the dead. Like Osiris, he is said to be in charge of courts or tribunals.[652] Occasionally, the tribunals of the two gods are mentioned in conjunction.[653] As noted above, the two truths are connected with Re rather than Osiris in the Coffin Texts. Although some spells locate the judgement of the dead in the underworld,[654] others say that it takes place in the sky, or more specifically in the bark of the sun god.[655] In subsequent periods of Egyptian history, Re continues to play a key role in assessing the conduct of those who have died. As we will see in the next chapter, his influence over this process grows ever greater with the passage of time.

[644] Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, pp. 87–8. [645] Ibid., p. 47.
[646] Ibid., pp. 46–8 and 74.
[647] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 209d. A contemporary literary text, the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant, contains a further allusion to Thoth in connection with the balance. See Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, p. 28.
[648] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 1, p. 181c–e.
[649] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, p. 298a–b.
[650] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 6, p. 323q–t.
[651] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 5, p. 321c–d. Cf. Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, p. 75. The idea that Re oversees the weighing process rather than Osiris is not restricted to the period under consideration. It persists even into Roman times. See, for example, D. Kurth, *Der Sarg der Teüris* (Mainz am Rhein, 1990), p. 9 and plate A.
[652] Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, pp. 74–6 and 115.
[653] See, for example, de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, pp. 333f and 337g.
[654] Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, pp. 103–4. [655] Ibid., pp. 100–1.

4.15.4. The rites of mummification

One important marker of the deceased's affiliation with Osiris was the designation 'Osiris of NN'. This is first attested in ritual contexts and remained restricted to them for a considerable period of time after its introduction.[656] Embedded as this status was in the sphere of the rite, it could only be conferred upon those who had undergone the ceremonies that brought about the deceased's transition from this life to the next. A number of texts are extant from the twenty-first dynasty that relate to the reburial of royal mummies by priests at Thebes. Some of them refer to this activity as 'repeating mummification for' (*wḥm qrs n*) the mummies in question. But other texts describe it as 'giving Osiris to' (*rdi.t Wsi̯r n*) the mummies. Thus the two expressions are equivalent.[657] This explains why the dead are called 'Osiris of NN', a locution that foregrounds the idea of possession. They have an Osiris because someone has given them one, and this has been done by (re)mummifying them and performing the attendant rites.[658]

A crucial aspect of the rituals associated with mummification was the justification of the deceased. The two concepts are closely linked. Justification has aptly been described as 'moral mummification', but it is just as valid to speak of mummification as 'corporeal justification'. The rites performed in the embalming place actually incorporated an assessment of the deceased's character which paralleled or prefigured those conducted in the sky or the underworld. Confirming that the deceased were free from sin was another way in which these rites helped to secure their acceptance among the followers of Osiris.[659]

In the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom, however, mummification was by no means a universal practice. In fact, it was still somewhat circumscribed.[660] But this does not mean that the deceased of that time were denied the benefits which the custom provided to their descendants. The rituals performed and the spells recited in conjunction with the mummification process were more important than the process itself in conferring the status of 'Osiris of NN' upon their beneficiaries. They were deemed to be sufficient for this purpose even in cases where the body was left untreated apart from being wrapped in linen, as was true in later periods of Egyptian history

[656] See section 3.10.

[657] Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, pp. 333–4.

[658] For the cognate expression *wḥm qrs* used with specific reference to the treatment of the mummy, compare the text on a statue of Ptolemaic date from Kom Abu Billu in the delta which describes how a son repeated the burial (*wḥm qrs*) of his father thirty-three years after his original interment 'with precious unguents and linen bandages from the temples'. See J. Clère, 'Le problème des personnes mentionnées sur une statue d'époque tardive ("Naophore" Vatican N° 97)', in J. Vercoutter (ed.), *Hommages à la mémoire de Serge Sauneron* 1 (Cairo, 1979), pp. 356–7. In one instance dating to the eighteenth dynasty, this expression was used with a more extended meaning to signify the repair or restoration of items of burial equipment in addition to the mummy itself, as noted in I. Régen, 'À propos du sens de *qrs*, "enterer"', in Régen and Servajean (eds), *Verba manent* 2, p. 394.

[659] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 6–7 and 26–7.

[660] See section 2.1.1.

as well.[661] We have a good idea of what these spells were like since several of them are incorporated in the Coffin Texts.[662]

Hays has claimed that the deceased were already associated with Osiris even before they underwent the rites that prepared them for life in the world to come.[663] He bases this claim on scenes in the eighteenth dynasty tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes that depict the transportation of the deceased's corpse to the necropolis for embalming. In these scenes, according to him, 'The sacerdotal recitations accompanying the actions already name the deceased as the god Osiris.'[664] In my view Hays's claim is based on two misunderstandings of the sources that he cites. First, the recitations do not name the tomb owner as the god Osiris. Rather they refer to him as 'Osiris of NN', which is something very different. As we have seen, this locution does not identify the deceased with Osiris. Instead, it marks them as one of that god's followers.[665]

Second, Hays's reading of the scenes and accompanying texts in Rekhmire's tomb assumes that they provide us with a linear narrative, akin to a comic strip or graphic novel. But they were not placed in the tomb to tell a story. Rather, they were meant to eternalize the events that they depict.[666] For this reason, the scenes cannot be read in a purely linear fashion. What they illustrate is not only a series of rites but the final results of those rites as well, which are perpetuated by virtue of their display on the walls of the tomb. Thus they present them from two perspectives: one viewing them as unfolding events, the other as acts already accomplished. That is why the deceased can be designated as 'Osiris of NN' in texts accompanying scenes depicting stages of the mortuary proceedings that in real time would have occurred prior to his acquisition of that status. The texts refer to him as he was at the end of the proceedings, not the stage depicted, since from the perspective of eternity this was the only thing that mattered.

For much the same reason, individuals could be called 'justified' (*mꜣʿ-ḫrw*) in tomb inscriptions even though they had not yet undergone the test of judgement at the time when the texts in question were inscribed on the walls of their sepulchres. Even living people were sometimes designated in this way when they were mentioned in texts written on stelae, statues, and other objects.[667] Such texts did not have to relate to the afterlife. What was important was that they were meant to function as permanent records, to be valid for all time. Here the use of the epithet 'justified' could be described as prospective or proleptic. Although the characters of the individuals thus designated

[661] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 34–5.

[662] For the spells in question, see Assmann, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien* 1.

[663] See H. Hays, 'Funerary Rituals (Pharaonic Period)', in J. Dieleman and W. Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2010), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1r32g9zn, p. 9.

[664] Ibid., p. 4.

[665] See sections 3.10.1, 3.10.4, and 4.10.1. Note that evidence from the Coffin Texts presented in section 4.10.4.3 disproves the assertion made by Hays in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1r32g9zn, p. 9, that no examples of the locution 'Osiris of NN' with the genitival *n* actually written out occur prior to the twenty-first dynasty.

[666] See discussion in section 4.6.2.

[667] See e.g. R. Caminos, *The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon* (Rome, 1958), p. 15; R. Caminos, 'Gebel es-Silsilah No. 100', *JEA* 38 (1952), p. 58.

had still to be scrutinized in the tribunal of the hereafter, the expectation was that they would be, and that the outcome would be favourable rather than the opposite. Hays appears to recognize that this is the case with the epithet 'justified',[668] but he does not see that the same applies to the locution 'Osiris of NN'. Elsewhere, in fact, he opts for a non-narrative, non-linear interpretation of the scenes and texts in the tomb of Rekhmire very much like the one given here, but without modifying his earlier claim about that locution.[669]

4.16. CONCLUSIONS

Many Egyptologists believe that the afterlife was 'democratized' in the aftermath of the Old Kingdom, which resulted in privileges formerly reserved for royalty, identification with Osiris and integration into the hierarchy of the gods in the next world, being usurped by non-royal individuals who had gained access to copies of the spells and rituals that were believed to confer them. Some maintain that this view first arose in reaction to the social and political upheavals of the First World War and the turmoil that ensued. In fact, the idea that a process which led to the democratization of the afterlife took place at the end of the Old Kingdom had already been expressed by James Henry Breasted as early as 1912, well before the outbreak of the war, and therefore its origin owed nothing to the troubles that followed that conflict.

The theory of the democratization of the afterlife rests on two foundations. The first is a fact: empirical evidence shows that copies of spells like those constituting the Pyramid Texts occur in royal tombs of the Old Kingdom but are not securely attested in non-royal tombs until the First Intermediate Period. The second foundation is an assumption: because the ruler occupied a unique position in Egyptian society while he was alive, this must have continued after his death. Therefore, royal expectations for the afterlife must have been different to and grander than non-royal expectations, just as royal tombs were larger and more elaborate than non-royal tombs.

This assumption has conditioned the interpretation of the empirical evidence just cited. The reason that non-royal individuals had no spells analogous to those of the Pyramid Texts in their tombs in the Old Kingdom, so many believe, is that they were denied any participation in the sort of afterlife that such spells presupposed. When spells of this nature did start to be used by non-royalty in the First Intermediate Period, it was because they had usurped or otherwise appropriated them from their rulers, a

[668] Hays in Dieleman and Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1r32g9zn, p. 8.

[669] See H. Hays, 'The End of Rites of Passage and a Start with Ritual Syntax in Ancient Egypt', in C. Ambos and L. Verderame (eds), *Approaching Rituals in Ancient Cultures* (Pisa and Rome, 2013), pp. 176–8.

development which could only have occurred at a time of weakened government control when the kings were powerless to prevent them from doing so.

But the assumption that royal aspirations for the afterlife differed significantly from non-royal ones in the Old Kingdom has no real basis in evidence. This removes one of the two foundations of the democratization theory. An important question remains unanswered, however. If ordinary Egyptians had the same aspirations for the afterlife as their rulers at this time, then why are the spells that would ensure fulfilment of these aspirations absent from their tombs? Investigation shows that this was not because they were denied access to them. In fact, there is ample evidence to show that non-royal individuals could and did employ the same corpus of spells to ensure their posthumous existence as their rulers, even though they did not display them in the places where they were buried. This is provided by addresses to visitors, offering lists, wishes in offering formulas, and representations of funerals found in private tombs of the fifth and sixth dynasties. These sources demonstrate that the empirical evidence provided by the distribution of extant texts for the hereafter in royal and non-royal tombs of the Old Kingdom cannot be interpreted in the way that proponents of the theory of the democratization of the afterlife have traditionally interpreted it. As a result, the remaining foundation of that theory is removed and it can no longer be maintained.

If non-royal individuals did have access to and expected to benefit from spells for the afterlife during the Old Kingdom, why did they not display these in their tombs or on objects deposited in them, as royalty did? There is no evidence that they were prevented from doing so by restrictions imposed from above. It is more likely that the absence of such spells from private tombs reflects an autonomous choice on the part of their owners not to inscribe them there. As a result, the initial appearance of Pyramid Text spells and related texts in private tombs near the end of the Old Kingdom or slightly later does not mark a change in ritual or belief that widened access to the texts in question, but rather a change in what was selected for display in the burial context. No ancient Egyptian source tells us why this occurred. The evidence that we have scrutinized makes it unlikely that the change was due to the sudden relaxation of an externally imposed constraint which had limited choice in this sphere previously. It is more probable that it reflects a shift in the configuration of customary practice, perhaps as a result of wider social trends like expansion in the use of writing or the increased influence of local traditions, rather than a dictate from some higher agency.

Religious change is not necessarily linked to political change; one can happen without the other. This is confirmed by the fact that basic conceptions of the afterlife seem to have been little affected by the far-reaching political changes that marked the end of the Old Kingdom, the First Intermediate Period, and the start of the Middle Kingdom. In particular, the Egyptian conception of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased remained essentially the same throughout this entire span of time, despite the political turmoil. There were nevertheless some important developments in terms of how and in what contexts ideas about that relationship were presented, and new sources inform us about aspects of it which are not mentioned in earlier ones. One of the most significant of these developments is that spells for the afterlife, including some

already attested in the Pyramid Texts, began to be inscribed on coffins and other items of burial equipment belonging to non-royal individuals. These are known as the Coffin Texts.

Although the date of the earliest coffins inscribed with these spells has been a matter of dispute, a number of them can be assigned to the First Intermediate Period with a fair degree of certainty. Another contentious matter is the relationship of the Coffin Texts to the Pyramid Texts. Recent research has tended to highlight their similarities and points of convergence rather than their differences, so much so that some have claimed that the two collections of spells are essentially one, both belonging to a single continuously developing corpus whose origins go back to the Old Kingdom. To be sure, individual spells and sequences of spells are common to both corpora, but this does not prove their identity. There are, in fact, substantial differences between them, both in terms of the subjects that they address and the emphasis placed upon these. In addition, there are very significant quantitative differences between the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts. Of those Pyramid Text spells in use during the Old Kingdom, only 47.2 per cent were transmitted into the Middle Kingdom. The remainder fell out of use entirely. It is difficult to argue identity between two collections of texts when one incorporates less than a half of the other. Far from being identical with each other, the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts are more accurately described as 'two interlocking corpora in the same tradition'.

Like the Pyramid Texts, the Coffin Texts configure the relationship between Osiris and the deceased in two different ways. Some assert that they are distinct from Osiris, others identify them with that god. Some spells do both. But the fact that some spells identify the deceased with Osiris does not mean that they were supposed to become that god on a permanent basis. On the contrary, the deceased's identification with that god was temporary and ritually contingent. It was valid at the moment of the spells' recitation but not beyond that fleeting event. Thus there is no basis for the claim made by some that in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom the deceased actually aspired to become Osiris.

A clear distinction has to be made between Coffin Text spells and the titles and colophons attached to them in terms of their informational content. The former tell us what happens in the evanescent moment of the ritual itself, the latter what is supposed to happen in the wider world beyond the rite as a consequence of its performance. Since the titles and colophons comment upon the function of the spells to which they are attached without being embedded in their ritual context, their interpretation is not subject to the same ambiguities that hinder our understanding of the utterances themselves. Thus they are a more reliable guide to the aspirations for the afterlife of those who composed the spells and those for whose benefit they were recited.

There is not a single spell in the entire corpus of Coffin Texts with a title or colophon that identifies the deceased with Osiris. In these, the deceased is invariably distinguished from Osiris, never identified with him. Since the titles and colophons provide an accurate reflection of the sort of relationship with the god that the Egyptians actually aspired to have in the afterlife, we can conclude that the composers of the Coffin Text

spells envisaged a posthumous existence in which the deceased would interact with Osiris, performing services for the god and enjoying various benefits arising from association with him in return, not one in which they would become Osiris.

The view that interaction rather than identification with Osiris was the aspiration of Egyptians of this time, based on the evidence provided by titles and colophons attached to Coffin Text spells, is confirmed by other sources which are contemporary with the Coffin Text corpus but have no direct connection with it. Among the most important of these are the private offering formulas preserved on sarcophagi, stelae, and other objects of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. The wishes expressed in these, in particular the group of wishes constituting the Abydos Formula, are invariably for some form of interaction with Osiris as a follower or adherent of his. Identification with the god is never envisaged. The same is true of other sources from this period: addresses to the living, the texts in private offering chapels, hymns to Osiris, and even literary works like the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant. In this respect, royal sources are no different to non-royal ones. Like their subjects, rulers of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom looked forward to interaction, not identification, with Osiris.

The locution *Wsỉr* NN, which we first encountered in the Pyramid Texts, continues to be used in the Coffin Texts as well. In that corpus the range of contexts in which the deceased are called *Wsỉr* NN expands and the locution is well on its way to becoming simply a marker of a deceased person's status as a member of Osiris's following and beneficiary of his favours in the afterlife. As such it can vary with simple NN in contexts where it was not deemed necessary to provide an explicit signal of an individual's affiliation with the god. Both men and women are addressed or referred to as *Wsỉr* NN. From an ancient Egyptian perspective, the gender of *Wsỉr* NN was the same as that of simple NN. If NN was feminine, so was *Wsỉr* NN. The evidence we have examined refutes the view expressed by some that prefixing *Wsỉr* to a woman's name caused her to become male. It was unnecessary for deceased women to change gender in order to be a follower of Osiris.

Examples of the locution *Wsỉr* NN occur outside the Coffin Text corpus as well, mainly in ritual contexts like those involving offerings. The distribution of these is markedly similar to that noted for such examples in private sources of the Old Kingdom. *Wsỉr* is never written before the deceased's name when this is preceded by the epithet '*imakh* before Osiris', and only rarely when it occurs in the *ḥtp dỉ nswt* offering formula with Osiris as donor. It would be superfluous in these contexts, since the epithet and the offering formula both signal the deceased's relationship with that god in terms that are more or less synonymous with those expressed by the locution *Wsỉr* NN.

A particularly interesting writing of the locution *Wsỉr* NN occurs in the version of Coffin Text Spell 399 inscribed on the coffin of a man called Iqer found at Gebelein, which is now in Turin. A genitival *n* is inserted between the initial element and the name of the deceased. Thus *Wsỉr n* NN, 'Osiris of NN', is clearly written and not simply *Wsỉr* NN. This is the earliest example known in which the genitival *n* is inserted between the elements of this locution, a phenomenon which becomes increasingly

common from the twenty-first dynasty onward. The version of this spell inscribed on another contemporary coffin substitutes *Wsir* NN for *Wsir n* NN, which shows that they are simply variants and must mean the same thing. Thus the former must be a direct genitival construction meaning 'Osiris of NN', just as *Wsir n* NN does, and should be translated as such wherever it occurs. It follows that the Pyramid Texts and all subsequent Egyptian texts for the afterlife that employ the locution *Wsir* NN refer to the deceased as 'Osiris of NN', not 'Osiris NN' as is commonly assumed.

It is impossible to say with certainty how far down the social scale access to spells for the afterlife extended during the Old Kingdom, but the evidence suggests that the group comprising their beneficiaries could have encompassed a range of different social levels, and not just high-ranking officials and priests who possessed the resources to build elaborate tombs in which they could publicly proclaim the fact that they had utterances of this type at their disposal.

In the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, the evidence for a wide diffusion of spells for the afterlife increases considerably. According to one view, access to their benefits was restricted to a tiny minority of individuals who could afford an elaborately decorated and inscribed coffin. But wishes in offering formulas and other sources show that individuals who did not possess coffins of this type had the same aspirations for the next world as those who did, and hoped to fulfil them by means of the same sort of spells as they used, even if they did not possess copies of these themselves. It is unthinkable, moreover, that the kings of the twelfth dynasty, who possessed neither tombs nor coffins inscribed with ritual utterances, were denied any hope of an afterlife. This shows once again the importance of distinguishing between access and display. If texts of a particular category are not displayed in a tomb, this does not constitute proof that the tomb owner had no access to them or no hope of enjoying their benefits in the hereafter.

One important new development that took place during the period under consideration was the rise in importance of Abydos as a cult centre of Osiris. The mysteries celebrated annually for him there became a focal point of hopes for posthumous interaction with the god. His festival was an event which it was believed deceased people could actually attend and in which they could take part alongside those who were still alive. Thus their interaction with the deity was not limited to the land of the dead over which Osiris reigned. They could join with other devotees in worshipping him in the land of the living as well. Being a follower of Osiris enabled the deceased to span both worlds, and Abydos served as an interface between them. Rites analogous to the Abydene Osiris mysteries were celebrated in other Egyptian cities, but it is not clear whether these offered the same opportunity for the living and the dead to join together in his worship.

A related development was the increased importance of the *ba* in the relationship between Osiris and the deceased. In *ba* form, the dead could leave the underworld and travel to other spheres of the cosmos like the sky and earth. This activity was known as 'going forth by day'. A number of sources refer to a group, variously defined as great *bas* of Osiris, living *bas* of Osiris, or *bas* of the bull of the west, which the deceased hope

to join. Thus the status of *ba* of Osiris does not simply associate them with the god, it connects them with a community as well, one composed of other *bas* who share the same relationship with the deity.

Although Osiris is the primary deity with whom the deceased interact during the period under consideration, he is by no means the only one with whom they can enjoy a relationship. In some instances, he himself plays no direct part in their interactions with other deities, which are complementary to their interactions with him. In others, he exerts himself on their behalf in concert with his fellow gods. Occasionally, Osiris is syncretized with another divinity or divinities, and it is the resulting composite deity with whom the deceased interact. Examples in this last category include Sokar-Osiris, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, and Osiris Khentiamentiu. As far as one can judge, the deceased's association with deities of this type does not differ markedly from their association with Osiris on his own. Affiliation with a composite divinity consisting of Osiris and another god does not seem to confer any advantages upon them as far as facilitating an independent relationship with the other god is concerned.

Evidence for a syncretism between Osiris and Re in the period under consideration is equivocal. Likewise, it is difficult to document the concept of a nocturnal union of the two gods in the underworld at this early date. Nevertheless, the sun god played an important role in Egyptian hopes and aspirations for the afterlife. Some texts of our period mention Re and Osiris together, but only rarely do these sources envisage the deceased as interacting with the two gods in conjunction. This is because they are counterparts who co-exist in two different spheres, one having dominion in the sky, the other in the underworld. The two deities normally act on behalf of the deceased in parallel, each in his own respective sphere. In some instances, however, the sun god exercises authority in both domains, as he is said to do in later sources as well.

Another deity with whom Osiris acts in parallel rather than in conjunction is Hathor. She functions as his female counterpart. In some sources of our period, deceased men are affiliated with Osiris and deceased women with Hathor. However, neither affiliation ruled out the other. Men too could be followers of the goddess, just as women could be devotees of the god. A stela inscribed for one woman calls her 'Osiris of NN, praised by Hathor', a designation that marks her affiliation with both deities at the same time. This is likely to be the precursor of the later locution 'Osiris Hathor of NN', which serves the same purpose in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods.

At least two different ways of joining the retinue of Osiris and obtaining the boons conferred by membership in it were envisaged during the Old Kingdom. These goals could be attained either with the help of ritual utterances or through divine intervention, sometimes in response to the prayers of the living. The same is true of the period under consideration in the present chapter. An important new development at this time, however, is the increased emphasis upon justification as a prerequisite for enjoying the benefits of membership in the following of Osiris. This meant not simply vindication in a dispute involving a specific enemy, but the positive assessment of one's character and conduct as a whole. In some cases Osiris himself is said to be in charge of the tribunal where the deceased are judged, but just as often the sun god assumes this

function. As we will see in the next chapter, Re continues to play a key role in assessing the conduct of those who have died in subsequent periods of Egyptian history.

One important marker of the deceased's affiliation with Osiris was the designation 'Osiris of NN'. The last question investigated here was how they attained that status. Contrary to one view, they did not acquire it automatically after death. The evidence shows that it could only be conferred upon those who had undergone the ceremonies that brought about the deceased's transition from this life to the next. In some sources these are described as 'giving Osiris' to the beneficiary. This explains why the dead are called 'Osiris of NN', a locution that foregrounds the idea of possession. They have an Osiris because someone has given them one, by means of the ritual acts performed for their benefit.

In the period under consideration, mummification was by no means a universal practice. But this does not mean that the deceased of that time were denied the benefits which the process was supposed to provide. The rituals performed and the spells recited in conjunction with mummification were more important than the process itself in conferring the status of 'Osiris of NN' upon their beneficiaries. They were deemed to be sufficient for this purpose even in cases where the body was left untreated apart from being wrapped in linen. The rites in question actually incorporated an assessment of the deceased's character which paralleled or prefigured those conducted in the sky or the underworld. Confirming that the deceased were free from sin was another way in which they helped to secure their acceptance among the followers of Osiris.

5

Re Resting in Osiris, Osiris Resting in Re: Osiris, Sun God, and the Deceased in the New Kingdom

In this chapter we will examine whether the relationship between Osiris and the deceased was influenced by developments in solar religion during the New Kingdom and, if so, how. The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part we will look at the status of Osiris as god of the dead during the Amarna Period. In the second part, we will investigate the phenomenon known as the 'solar-Osirian unity', which some claim characterizes the post-Amarna New Kingdom, and how this affected ideas concerning the relationship between Osiris and the deceased.

5.1. AKHENATEN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS RELIGIOUS IDEAS

5.1.1. Successive stages in the development of Akhenaten's solar theology

Amenhotep IV, later Akhenaten, came to the throne of Egypt *c.*1353 BC and reigned until *c.*1335.[1] The years of his rule witnessed many new developments, in art, construction techniques, the writing of texts, and so on. But the sphere in which the most marked changes came about was that of religion. As is well known, Amenhotep IV had

[1] For overviews of the events in this king's reign, see e.g. A. Dodson, *Amarna Sunrise: Egypt from Golden Age to Age of Heresy* (Cairo, 2014); D. Silverman, J. Wegner, and J. Houser Wegner, *Akhenaten and Tutankhamun: Revolution and Restoration* (Philadelphia, 2006); N. Reeves, *Akhenaten: Egypt's False Prophet* (London, 2001); C. Aldred, *Akhenaten King of Egypt* (London, 1988); J. Hoffmeier, *Akhenaten and the Origins of Monotheism* (Oxford, 2015). Shorter accounts include C. Hanus, 'Before and after Amarna—The Beginnings and Consequences of the Cult of the Aten', in F. Seyfried (ed.), *In the Light of Amarna: 100 Years of the Nefertiti Discovery* (Berlin, 2012), pp. 32–41; and W. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt* (Atlanta, 1995), pp. 1–10.

a special devotion to the solar cult, in particular, to the visible manifestation of the solar deity: the sun in the sky, which the ancient Egyptians called Aten.

Several stages are apparent in the development of the king's solar theology. In the early years of his reign, the sun god continued to be represented in his traditional form, a human figure with the head of a falcon surmounted by a sun disk. The name of this deity is said to be Re-Harakhti, which means 'Re-Horus-the horizon-dweller'. But this was expanded in a particular way. The new longer form of the god's name was 'Re-Harakhti lives, rejoicing in the horizon in his name as light which is in the sun disk'.[2]

Three further significant changes occurred in the early part of the king's reign. First, the traditional iconography of the sun god was altered. No longer was he depicted as a falcon-headed anthropomorphic figure. Instead he was shown as a disk with rays extending from it that end in human hands. This became the standard way of representing the god for the rest of the king's reign.[3] Second, the longer form of the god's name became fixed, as if all part of a single unit, and began to be written in cartouches, as if it were a royal name.[4] The third new development was that Amenhotep IV began building special temples for the sun god. These were concentrated in Thebes, the main religious centre of Upper Egypt and sacred city of the god Amun, where he built no less than four. But the king erected new temples for his deity in other locations as well, some of them as far away as Nubia.[5]

Two important changes took place in the king's fifth regnal year. First, he altered his name from Amenhotep, which means 'Amun is content', to Akhenaten, which means 'Beneficial for the sun disk'. Then he decided to leave Thebes altogether and found a new city in Middle Egypt at the present-day site of Tell el-Amarna.[6] The king claimed to have done this in accordance with the instructions of the solar deity.[7] The name of his new city was Akhetaten, 'Horizon of the sun disk'. There the sun god was worshipped in temples that differed considerably from those that had been constructed for other Egyptian gods. They featured courtyards open to the sky so that they were bathed in the sun's rays, with numerous altars at which offerings were presented.[8]

Even after the move to Akhetaten, Akhenaten's ideas about the solar deity continued to develop. At a certain point in his reign the name of the god underwent a further change. The latest known example of the earlier form occurs in a text dated to the last day of the fourth month of the inundation season in Akhenaten's eighth regnal year.[9]

[2] See e.g. the block extracted from the tenth pylon at Karnak (Berlin ÄM 2072) reproduced in Seyfried (ed.), *In the Light of Amarna*, frontispiece and p. 207.

[3] Ibid., pp. 78 and 85–9.

[4] See examples reproduced ibid., pp. 229 and 237.

[5] For the building activities of Amenhotep IV, see Dodson, *Amarna Sunrise*, pp. 89–100.

[6] B. Kemp, *The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Amarna and its People* (London, 2012).

[7] W. Murnane and C. van Siclen, *The Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten* (London, 1993), pp. 20–1.

[8] For the temples at Amarna, see Kemp, *The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti*, pp. 79–121.

[9] Murnane and van Siclen, *The Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten*, p. 97. For the position of this date near the end of the regnal year, see ibid., pp. 154–5.

The new form of the name is first securely documented in a text dated to the eighth day of the second month of the winter season in his twelfth regnal year.[10] Therefore the change must have occurred in the interval between those two dates.[11] The new form of the sun god's name was 'Re lives, the ruler of the two horizons, rejoicing in the horizon in his name as Re the father who comes as the sun disk'.[12] This new form eliminates the reference to the god Horus; now only Re is mentioned. It eliminates some hieroglyphs that suggest other divinities as well, not just the falcon of Horus but also the feather used to write the word 'light' in the earlier version of the name, which appears in the name of the god Shu.[13]

This apparent desire to avoid referring to other deities manifests itself not only in the name of the sun disk but in orthographies of other words as well. Around this time, the word Maat begins to be spelled out phonetically, and is no longer written with the hieroglyph depicting the goddess of that name (Gardiner Sign-List C10). Likewise, the noun *mw.t*, 'mother', is written alphabetically, avoiding the hieroglyph that depicts the vulture associated with the goddess Mut (Gardiner Sign-List G14).[14] The word *nṯr*, 'god', was used only in the singular, not the plural. Eventually even this changed. The royal epithet 'perfect god' was replaced by 'perfect ruler', as if not only the idea of a multitude of gods but the very concept expressed by the word *nṯr* was no longer acceptable.[15]

The end of Akhenaten's reign witnessed many problems. Foreign relations deteriorated, and plagues ravaged Egypt. Perhaps exacerbated by these pressures, the king's stress on the uniqueness of the sun god now developed into outright iconoclasm. On monuments all over Egypt, and in Nubia as well, the figure and name of the god Amun were effaced, sometimes even where the latter was an element within the name of Akhenaten's father Amenhotep III.[16] The names of deities associated with Amun, for

[10] See M. Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten* (Brussels, 1938), p. 36, line 17.

[11] See Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, p. 8; Aldred, *Akhenaten King of Egypt*, p. 278; C. Vandersleyen, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil* 2 (Paris, 1995), p. 430. If graffiti from Amarna dated to year 9 preserve an abbreviated form of the later name, then the change will have occurred even earlier. See B. Gunn, 'Notes on the Aten and his Names', *JEA* 9 (1923), pp. 172–3. For arguments that the name change may have occurred after year 12, see M. Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon* (Lyon and Paris, 1998), pp. 110–18.

[12] See e.g. Seyfried (ed.), *In the Light of Amarna*, pp. 226–7.

[13] Cf. J. Allen, 'The Natural Philosophy of Akhenaten', in W.K. Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt* (New Haven, 1989), pp. 93–4.

[14] Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, p. 8; A. Grimm and H. Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit* (Wiesbaden, 2005), p. 20; Vandersleyen, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil* 2, p. 431; Allen in Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 90–1.

[15] Ibid., p. 94; Vandersleyen, *L'Égypte et la vallée du Nil* 2, p. 431; Aldred, *Akhenaten King of Egypt*, p. 278.

[16] P. Der Manuelian, 'Semi-Literacy in Egypt: Some Erasures from the Amarna Period', in E. Teeter and J. Larson (eds), *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente* (Chicago, 1999), pp. 286–9; R. Hari, 'La religion amarnienne et la tradition polythéiste', in F. Junge (ed.), *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf* 2 (Göttingen, 1984), pp. 1039–43; Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, pp. 32–4.

example, Mut, were subjected to attacks as well.[17] References to 'gods' in the plural were chiselled away,[18] statues were smashed, and even inscriptions on scarabs defaced. This destruction was the culminating phase of the Amarna religion. While it was going on the king died, effectively bringing his theological programme to an end, although the cult of the Aten survived for a few years after his demise.[19]

5.1.2. The chief characteristics of Akhenaten's solar theology

There are five significant features of the new religious doctrine promulgated by Akhenaten. The first is that it developed gradually over the course of his reign. As we have seen in section 5.1.1, it did not emerge all at once. It is worth noting in this connection that, although the king's ideas are sometimes described as revolutionary, they do nevertheless reflect conceptions that had already arisen even before he came to the throne, in particular, the so-called 'new solar theology'. Admittedly, Amarna religion carries this theology to an extreme, but it is nevertheless recognizable as one of its outgrowths.[20] Some even believe that the changes introduced by Akhenaten, far from being revolutionary, were actually an attempt to restore earlier religious concepts dating back as far as the Old Kingdom.[21]

The second significant feature of Amarna religion is the special position of the king himself within it. He is the only one who has a personal relationship with the sun disk, who is said to be his father. Akhenaten alone can truly know him or understand his ways.[22] As a result, the king functions as an intermediary between his god and his subjects.[23] Considerable emphasis is placed on the royal aspect of the deity embodied in the sun disk. Not only is his name written in cartouches, he is also said to celebrate *sed*-festivals or jubilees, just like a king.[24] Some scholars say the sun disk is a rather impersonal ruler, however.[25] He does not listen to the prayers of humanity, minister to their needs, or help them in time of trouble. Rather, it is Akhenaten himself who does these things, taking on the role of god, and he is worshipped as such by his subjects. This is a widely held view. We will see in due course whether it is valid or not.

[17] Der Manuelian in Teeter and Larson (eds), *Gold of Praise*, pp. 291–4; Hari in Junge (ed.), *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf* 2, pp. 1039–41.

[18] Der Manuelian in Teeter and Larson (eds), *Gold of Praise*, pp. 289–91; Hari in Junge (ed.), *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf* 2, p. 1041.

[19] M. Raven and R. van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara* (Turnhout, 2014), p. 56.

[20] J. Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom: Re, Amun and the Crisis of Polytheism* (London and New York, 1995), pp. 67–8.

[21] T. von der Way, 'Überlegungen zur Jenseitsvorstellung in der Amarnazeit', *ZÄS* 123 (1996), pp. 162–3.

[22] Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 95, lines 16–17.

[23] Cf. Allen in Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 97–9; S. Bickel, '"Ich spreche ständig zu Aton…": Zur Mensch-Gott-Beziehung in der Amarna Religion', *JANER* 3 (2003), pp. 28–9.

[24] Gunn, *JEA* 9 (1923), pp. 168–72.

[25] See e.g. Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom*, pp. 191–2 and 206–7.

The third distinctive feature of Amarna religion is that it concentrates very much upon what is visible, what can be apprehended or perceived by the senses.[26] The light of the sun and its life-giving properties are stressed again and again. As a consequence of the fact that so much emphasis is given to the visible aspect of that celestial body, texts of the Amarna Period contain numerous references to the eyes and faces of those who view the sun disk, many different words for light and brightness, and a wide range of terms to denote the acts of seeing and beholding.

The fourth feature is that, because of this emphasis on what can be observed empirically, there is no real mythology in Akhenaten's religion.[27] According to the underworld guides attested earlier in the eighteenth dynasty, the sun god sailed through the sky in a bark each day and was towed through the underworld each night, re-emerging in the eastern horizon at dawn to start the cycle again. A range of other deities served as members of his crew. In the course of his journey through the nether regions he was greeted and assisted by the beings who lived there. He also encountered enemies like the giant serpent Apopis, who had to be overcome before he could continue on his way. In Amarna religion, all this became obsolete, since the focus now was entirely upon what one could actually see. The sun's disk moves across the sky, casting its rays upon the earth and illuminating it, giving life to things and causing plants to grow. More than that we cannot say, since the sun, although visible, is distant from the earth in a place to which we cannot travel. Nor can we say what happens to the sun at night, or discover where it goes when it sinks below the horizon. All that can be observed empirically is that it disappears from sight and, as a result, the earth grows dark and cold.

The fifth and final distinctive feature of Amarna religion, which is again a consequence of its emphasis upon what can be apprehended by the senses, is its exclusive concern with the present, the here and now.[28] The past, how the world came into being, was of little importance to Akhenaten. There is no Amarna creation myth. What is important instead is the continuous creation that takes place every morning.[29] Each time the sun rises at dawn, the darkness is dispelled and all creatures wake to a new life. Similarly, there is little attention given to the future. Death is rarely mentioned in Amarna texts, and then usually in a figurative or oblique way. People are said to live when the sun rises and die when it sets.[30] At night, they lie down as if in the state (*sḫr*) of death.[31] Death in turn is mostly treated as a temporary condition like sleep from which people awaken at the start of each new day.

[26] Ibid., pp. 88–9; J. Assmann, 'Akhanyati's Theology of Light and Time', *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 7 no. 4 (1992), pp. 147–8 and 150.
[27] Ibid., pp. 149–50.
[28] Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom*, p. 158.
[29] Assmann, *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 7 no. 4 (1992), pp. 152–5.
[30] Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 95, lines 17–18.
[31] Ibid., p. 13, lines 1–4. Cf. Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, p. 19.

5.2. CONCEPTIONS OF THE AFTERLIFE DURING THE AMARNA PERIOD

What about ideas concerning the afterlife? Belief in the hereafter did not cease during the Amarna Period, nor did the new doctrine require the abandonment of all traditional ideas and practices related to the next world. The dead continued to be buried in tombs.[32] We have depictions of mummies in some of these,[33] and references to them in others,[34] so it would appear that mummification was still practised. Interestingly, however, excavations at the cemetery adjacent to the south tombs at Amarna have so far revealed no evidence of deliberate embalming. The bodies there were only wrapped in textiles.[35] Nevertheless, formulas inscribed on shabtis, small figures buried with the dead to work as servants for them in the hereafter, as well as other texts in tombs, show that protecting the body and preserving it from decay were still deemed to be important.[36]

The same sort of equipment, coffins, shabtis, and canopic vessels for storing the deceased's viscera, continued to be used in burials.[37] In fact, even members of the royal family, including Akhenaten himself, had shabtis, and there was a workshop where they were made near the palace at Amarna.[38] Funerals are depicted in the royal tomb and the tomb of Huya there, and in tombs at other sites as well.[39] Veneration of

[32] See, for example, M. Hesse, *Die Privatgräber von Amarna—Zum Wandel des Grabgedankens in Zeiten eines religiösen Umbruchs* (Oxford, 2013).

[33] Cf. the scene from the tomb of Huya at Amarna reproduced in N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 3 (London, 1905), plate 22, and Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, p. 140, figure 6. There are also depictions of a mummy on the model coffin of Ineni found in the vicinity of the royal magazines in Akhetaten. See J. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten* 3 (London, 1951), pp. 90, 92, and plate 104.

[34] Raven and van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara*, p. 86. The text referring to the tomb owner's mummy belongs to what they call phase II of the tomb's decoration, which they date to the latter part of Akhenaten's reign, following his ninth year on the throne.

[35] B. Kemp, A. Stevens, G. Dabbs, M. Zabecki, and J. Rose, 'Life, Death, and Beyond in Akhenaten's Egypt: Excavating the South Tombs Cemetery at Amarna', *Antiquity* 87 (2013), p. 67.

[36] See the inscription on a specimen discussed in G. Martin, 'Shabtis of Private Persons in the Amarna Period', *MDAIK* 42 (1986), pp. 114–15: 'Your limbs are protected, your heart is glad. No evil will befall your limbs, for you are hale. Your flesh will not decay.' For other Amarna Period texts that highlight the importance of preserving the body, see C. Reiche, 'Überlegungen zum nichtköniglichen Totenglauben in der Amarnazeit', in M. Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen: Festschrift für Rolf Gundlach zum 65. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden, 1996), p. 211.

[37] K. Widmaier, 'Totenfiguren ohne Totenreich: Überlegungen zu den königlichen Uschebti aus Amarna', in C. Peust (ed.), *Miscellanea in honorem Wolfhart Westendorf* (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 155–6; A. Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna: The Material Evidence* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 8 and 94–6; Hari in Junge (ed.), *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf* 2, pp. 1046–8.

[38] Martin, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), p. 127. For shabtis of Akhenaten, see G. Martin, *The Royal Tomb at el-'Amarna* 1 (London, 1974), pp. 37–72; Widmaier in Peust (ed.), *Miscellanea in honorem Wolfhart Westendorf*, pp. 153–60.

[39] Martin, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), p. 110; G. Martin, *The Royal Tomb at el-'Amarna* 2 (London, 1989), pp. 23–6, 37–40, and 43–8; Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 3, plate 22.

dead ancestors continued, as is demonstrated by stelae and busts that were set up in private houses.[40] The concept of the *ka* or double is still important in texts of the Amarna Period, as is that of the *ba*.[41] In *ba* form the deceased were thought to be able to leave their tombs. But it was also expected that the *ba* would return to the corpse each night.[42] People still hoped to receive offerings of food, drink and clothing, showing that the dead were thought to require sustenance and other material things, just as before.[43] Some tombs depict relatives presenting such offerings.[44] There are even depictions showing the Ritual of Opening of the Mouth, the purpose of which was to reanimate the deceased's mummy.[45]

5.3. EVIDENCE FOR OSIRIS IN THE AMARNA PERIOD

Where did this leave Osiris? According to a widely held view in Egyptology, there was no place for him or the Osirian afterlife in Akhenaten's new religion.[46] As a result, the elaborate belief system that had grown up around the god of the dead was replaced by a much simpler one. The dead were buried in their tombs, they slept in them at night, and awakened at dawn. Each day their *bas* would leave the tombs in order to participate in the cult performed at the temples in Akhetaten. The one who provided the deceased with the means to do this was the king himself, who was the only guarantor of the afterlife.[47]

[40] Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna*, pp. 145–9 and 293–5; A. Stevens, 'The Material Evidence for Domestic Religion at Amarna and Preliminary Remarks on its Interpretation', *JEA* 89 (2003), pp. 157 and 164–5.

[41] See e.g. Martin, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), pp. 111–13 and 123; von der Way, *ZÄS* 123 (1996), p. 160; Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna*, p. 313; Reiche in Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen*, p. 211; Hari in Junge (ed.), *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf* 2, p. 1051; L. Žabkar, *A Study of the Ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 156–9.

[42] Compare the offering formulas in the tomb of Meryre at Amarna which request that he be allowed to enter and leave his tomb and that his *ba* might alight upon his corpse (N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 1 [London, 1903], plate 34).

[43] Martin, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), pp. 111–15 and 123–4; Reiche in Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen*, pp. 211–12.

[44] Von der Way, *ZÄS* 123 (1996), pp. 158–9; Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna*, p. 313.

[45] See Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten* 3, plate 104; Raven and van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara*, pp. 104–6, 120–5, and 180.

[46] See references cited in Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 11.

[47] For this view, see e.g. E. Hornung, *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light* (Ithaca, 1999), pp. 95–104; E. Hornung, 'The Rediscovery of Akhenaton and his Place in Religion', *JARCE* 29 (1992), pp. 48–9; Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, p. 21; Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 5; Hesse, *Die Privatgräber von Amarna*, p. 84.

5.3.1. Was Osiris proscribed by Akhenaten?

Unlike Amun, there is little evidence for a persecution or proscription of Osiris during the Amarna Period.[48] There are relatively few certain examples of the latter's name being erased from earlier monuments or objects.[49] We even know of cases where his name and/or image were left intact but those of Amun immediately adjacent to them were effaced.[50] This is true even at Amarna. A vessel found in a pit associated with magazines of the royal estates bore the name and titles of the earlier eighteenth dynasty ruler Hatshepsut, part of whose throne name (*Ḫnm.t-ỉmn Ḥ3.t-špss.wt*) incorporates that of Amun, as well as the names of Amun-Re and Osiris. The name of Amun was effaced wherever it occurred on this object, while that of Osiris was spared.[51] Similarly, a cube statue dating to the reign of Tuthmosis III or Amenhotep II was inscribed with the names of Amun-Re and Osiris. This was later moved from its original location to Amarna, where it was ultimately discovered by modern excavators. To adapt the statue to its new setting, Amun-Re's name was altered to Aten-Re, but the name of Osiris was left as it was.[52] Accordingly, many Egyptologists think that Osiris was not so much attacked during the reign of Akhenaten as he was ignored.

[48] See R. Krauss, 'Akhenaten: Monotheist? Polytheist?', *BACE* 11 (2000), pp. 95–6; R. Krauss, *Moïse le pharaon* (Paris, 2000), pp. 61–4; Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, pp. 33 and 94–5. A decree from the Aten temple of Karnak mentions taxes levied on the temple of Osiris lord of Busiris, presumably to support the new cult, but this is imposed on temples of several other deities as well, including one belonging to Re (Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, pp. 30–1). Furthermore, the fact that taxes are levied on these institutions presupposes that they will remain in existence and continue to generate revenue.

[49] For a rare instance in which the name of Osiris may have been effaced, see Der Manuelian in Teeter and Larson (eds), *Gold of Praise*, p. 289 note 11, citing N. de Garis Davies, *Scenes from Some Theban Tombs (Nos. 38, 66, 162, with Excerpts from 81)* (Oxford, 1963), p. 12. N. Reeves, 'A Fragment from the Canopic Jar of an Amarna Queen', *RdE* 45 (1994), pp. 198–200, suggests that the name of Osiris was replaced by that of the Aten in a text on a fragment of a canopic vessel belonging to an anonymous royal wife, now in the British Museum (EA 9558). His interpretation is followed in Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, pp. 141–4, 265, and 284, but the surviving traces of the effaced portion of the inscription do not support the restoration of *Wsỉr*.

[50] Krauss, *Moïse le pharaon*, pp. 61–4; K. Dyroff and B. Pörtner, *Aegyptische Grabsteine und Denksteine aus süddeutschen Sammlungen* 2 (Strasbourg, 1904), pp. 27–8 and plate 13 (no. 19); Der Manuelian in Teeter and Larson (eds), *Gold of Praise*, p. 289. A striking example occurs on a block of Amenhotep III reused in the funerary temple of Merenptah. See S. Bickel, *Tore und andere Wiederverwendete Bauteile Amenophis III.* (= *Untersuchungen im Totentempel des Merenptah in Theben* 3) (Stuttgart, 1997), plates 55 and 82.

[51] Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna*, p. 167; cf. Pendlebury, *The City of Akhenaten* 3, pp. 90, 92, and plate 74.8.

[52] Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 24; M. El-Damaty, 'Squatting Statues in the Cairo Museum', *MDAIK* 46 (1990), p. 5 and plate 5; R. Schulz, *Die Entwicklung und Bedeutung des kuboiden Statuentypus: Eine Untersuchung zu den sogenannten 'Würfelhockern'* 1 (Hildesheim, 1992), p. 309.

5.3.2. Survey of texts mentioning Osiris which have been dated to the reign of Akhenaten

But we do actually find references to Osiris, as well as to some other deities associated with the traditional Egyptian afterlife like Anubis, in texts that have been dated to the Amarna Period itself. We will consider a representative sample here. On jar sealings from the Saqqara tomb of an official called Aper-El, who held the title of first servant of the Aten, the king himself is referred to by his prenomen, Neferkheperure, and called 'beloved of Wennefer' (an epithet of Osiris).[53] On a shabti of unknown provenance inscribed for a female singer of the Aten she is called *imakh* before Osiris.[54] The offering formulas on a stela inscribed for Huy, an employee of the mansion of the Aten, found at Saqqara (CG 34182), name that deity as the donor, but refer to the owner as *Wsỉr* NN.[55] The coffin of a man called Hatiay, a scribe and overseer of the granary attached to the mansion of the Aten, was discovered in his tomb at Thebes. The texts on this and the objects interred with it call him *Wsỉr* NN and mention Osiris, Anubis, and other funerary deities.[56] Offering formulas on a door jamb from the tomb of Ipi at Riqqeh, now in Cairo, identify him as a scribe and overseer of fields attached to the estate of the Aten. However, the donors in the formulas in question are Osiris, Atum, and Anubis.[57] On a cornice from the same tomb, now in Munich, Ipi is depicted in the act of worshipping Osiris,[58] while the text on a heart scarab found among his grave goods refers to him as *Wsỉr* NN.[59]

Statues of a man and his wife were found at Nefrusi, about 25 km from Amarna itself. He was the mayor of that town. The inscriptions on his statue, which include hymns to the god Khnum, name the reigning king as Waenre, i.e. Akhenaten. His wife's statue is inscribed with an offering formula that names Osiris as the donor. She herself is referred to as *Wsỉr* NN.[60] A cube statue now in Berlin was inscribed for a man called Amenemope.[61] Based on the treatment of the face, which resembles that of

[53] A. Zivie, *Découverte à Saqqarah: Le vizier oublié* (Paris, 1990), p. 162; Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, p. 53.

[54] Martin, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), pp. 115–16 and plate 11; R. Freed, Y. Markowitz, and S. D'Auria (eds), *Farao's van de Zon: Achnaton, Nefertiti, Toetanchamon* (Leiden, 1999), p. 271. For what Martin calls 'contemporary or near contemporary shabtis bearing the standard text from Spell 6 of the Book of the Dead', see Martin, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), pp. 118–26 and plates 15–19. A number of these refer to the deceased as *Wsỉr* NN.

[55] P. Lacau, *CGC: Stèles du Nouvel Empire* 1 (Cairo, 1909), p. 223–4 and plate 69; B. Löhr, 'Akhanjāti in Memphis', *SAK* 2 (1975), pp. 176–8 and plate 8.

[56] G. Daressy, 'Rapport sur la trouvaille de *Ḥꜣt-ỉꜣy*', *ASAE* 2 (1901), pp. 1–13. Cf. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, pp. 67–8; Hari in Junge (ed.), *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf* 2, pp. 1051–2.

[57] R. Engelbach, *Riqqeh and Memphis* 6 (London, 1915), p. 17 and plate 15.1.

[58] Ibid., p. 17 and plate 15.2.

[59] Ibid., p. 11 and plate 16.7.

[60] G. Daressy, 'Deux statues de Balansourah', *ASAE* 18 (1919), pp. 53–7. Cf. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, pp. 47–50; Hari in Junge (ed.), *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf* 2, p. 1043.

[61] Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, plate 38.

Akhenaten, a number of authors have proposed a date in the early part of that king's reign for the statue.[62] It is inscribed with an offering formula in which Osiris is named alongside the living Aten as a donor. The earliest extant example of the composition known as the Harpist's Song was inscribed on a wall in the tomb of the royal butler Paatenemheb at Saqqara. This work mentions the weary-hearted one (= Osiris) and says that those who depart for the next world do not return.[63] On his false door, Paatenemheb is depicted worshipping Osiris. The god figures in its offering formulas as donor and their beneficiary is called *Wsi̯r* NN.[64]

The texts on a stela of unknown provenance belonging to a man called Nakhtmin refer to the Aten by the early form of his name in conjunction with Akhenaten and his queen Nefertiti.[65] But the object also names and depicts Anubis, who still has his traditional epithets. Additionally, it preserves a copy of a hymn to the solar deity resembling Spell 15 of the Book of the Dead, in which the god is called Re and Atum when he sets, and various mythological constructs are mentioned, including the deity's mother, his evening bark, and the sea of knives. A lintel from the Saqqara tomb of another man called Hatiay (not the same as the one whose coffin was described above), now in the Louvre, preserves a short hymn which is also incorporated in Spell 181 of the Book of the Dead, the purpose of which is to allow the deceased to enter the tribunal of Osiris.[66]

Blocks from the tomb of Ptahmay found at Giza and now in Cairo preserve addresses to the Aten.[67] The tomb owner was employed as a chief of makers of gold leaf by the estate of the Aten. However one of his deceased relatives, a man called Mehy, who is also named and depicted in the tomb, is referred to as *Wsi̯r* NN.[68] The scenes on blocks from the tomb of a merchant called Merya discovered at Saqqara include a depiction of an enthroned Osiris, while the accompanying texts include numerous references to him.[69] Of particular interest is the evidence from the tomb of Parennefer

[62] See ibid., pp. 23–4, and references cited there.

[63] See P. Boeser, *Beschreibung der Aegyptischen Sammlung des Niederländischen Reichsmuseums der Altertümer in Leiden* 4 (Haag, 1911), plate 6; Freed, Markowitz, and D'Auria (eds), *Farao's van de Zon*, p. 286. Only the second element and seated god determinative of the epithet *wr̤d-i̯b*, 'weary-hearted one', are preserved in this copy. The rest of the epithet has to be restored from a parallel in P. Harris 500, for which see M. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison, 1985), p. 380; M. Fox, 'A Study of Antef', *Orientalia* 46 (1977), p. 406.

[64] Boeser, *Beschreibung der Aegyptischen Sammlung des Niederländischen Reichsmuseums der Altertümer in Leiden* 4, plate 9.

[65] See W. von Bissing, 'Stele des Nechtmin aus der El Amarnazeit', *ZÄS* 64 (1929), pp. 113–17 with plate 4; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, pp. 144–5; Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, pp. 54–5; Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 15.

[66] For bibliography, see ibid., pp. 25–6; D. Luft, *Osiris-Hymnen: Wechselnde Materialisierungen und Kontexte* 2 (Tübingen, forthcoming).

[67] C. Zivie, 'À propos de quelques reliefs du Nouvel Empire au Musée du Caire: I. La tombe de Ptahmay à Giza', *BIFAO* 75 (1975), pp. 285–310 and plates 51–6; Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, pp. 56–7.

[68] Zivie, *BIFAO* 75 (1975), p. 296.

[69] See J. Quibell and A. Hayter, *Teti Pyramid, North Side* (Cairo, 1927), pp. 36–7 and plates 15–18.

at Thebes (TT 188).[70] The owner was an important official, an intimate of Akhenaten, who moved to Amarna with that king and later acquired a second tomb there. Among his titles is that of overseer of all works of the king in the estate of the Aten. Akhenaten is actually depicted in Parennefer's Theban tomb and his prenomen Neferkheperure Waenre is mentioned a number of times in the accompanying inscriptions. In one scene, remains of his original nomen, Amenhotep, can still be discerned.[71] The early form of the name of the Aten appears as well. But other texts in this sepulchre include an offering formula in which Anubis is named as the donor and a hymn to Re-Harakhti in which the tomb owner is called *Wsir* NN.[72]

A fragment of an offering table (Q47.22) excavated in the Workmen's Village at Amarna is decorated with a prayer to Osiris around its edge.[73] In addition, various uninscribed small objects attesting to veneration of that god have been discovered at Akhenaten's capital. More than thirty copper alloy figurines of Osiris, Isis, and Horus were found in the central city.[74] Two amulets depicting Osiris were unearthed at Amarna as well, along with numerous additional figures representing other members of the traditional Egyptian pantheon.[75]

5.3.3. Texts mentioning Osiris whose attribution to the reign of Akhenaten is doubtful

This list might seem rather impressive at first glance, but there is a serious problem with some its constituent items, due to uncertainty over their date. The dating of artefacts from this part of the New Kingdom is often problematic, and it is not always easy to distinguish genuine products of the reign of Akhenaten from work produced earlier or later. This is because certain features of what is often called Amarna style can be found on objects pre-dating or post-dating that period as well.[76] Although a date in the reign of Akhenaten has been proposed at least once for every item in our list, not all such attributions have been universally accepted.

Widmaier, for example, has questioned whether some of the shabtis attributed to the Amarna Period by Martin may not actually post-date it.[77] According to one view, the tomb of Hatiay at Thebes could be as early as the reign of Akhenaten's predecessor,

[70] N. de Garis Davies, 'Akhenaten at Thebes', *JEA* 9 (1923), pp. 136–45; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, pp. 140–4.

[71] Davies, *JEA* 9 (1923), p. 139 and plate 23.

[72] Ibid., p. 142, line 9, and p. 141, line 5.

[73] Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna*, p. 196; L. Borchardt and H. Ricke, *Die Wohnhäuser in Tell el-Amarna* (Berlin, 1980), p. 164. This object is cited more frequently than it is actually depicted in the literature, so it is difficult to ascertain the contents of the prayer.

[74] Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna*, p. 79.

[75] Hari in Junge (ed.) *Studien zu Sprache und Religion Ägyptens zu Ehren von Wolfhart Westendorf* 2, pp. 1044–5; Stevens, *JEA* 89 (2003), pp. 158 and 165.

[76] See H. Schneider, *The Tomb of Iniuia in the New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis at Saqqara* (Turnhout, 2012), p. 120.

[77] Widmaier in Peust (ed.), *Miscellanea in honorem Wolfhart Westendorf*, p. 158 note 37.

Amenhotep III.[78] Schneider and others date the tomb of Paatenemheb to the time after the end of the Amarna Period rather than to that period itself.[79] The lintel of Hatiay from Saqqara has been dated by some to the early years of Akhenaten when he was still calling himself Amenhotep, by others to the transitional period between his reign and that of his predecessor Amenhotep III, and by others to the post-Amarna Period.[80] The most recent detailed study of this object assigns it to the period between the reigns of Tutankhamun and Horemheb.[81] The blocks from the tomb of Ptahmay at Giza have been redated to this time as well.[82] A similar date has been proposed for the blocks from the tomb of Merya at Saqqara.[83] Finally, some of the smaller objects found at the site of Amarna itself, figurines, amulets, and so on, could post-date the Amarna Period, since we know that the city of Akhetaten continued to be inhabited as late as the reign of Tutankhamun.[84]

Given the limitations of stylistic criteria as a means of determining whether or not an object dates to the reign of Akhenaten, one has to take other sorts of evidence into account. It might be thought that the presence of a personal name or names incorporating that of the Aten on an object would constitute proof that it dated to Akhenaten's reign, but in fact such names continued in use into the early nineteenth dynasty.[85] The owners of a number of objects and monuments cited in section 5.3.2 possessed titles indicating that they were employed by a temple dedicated to the Aten. Such titles might be considered a more reliable indicator of a date in the reign of Akhenaten, but there is evidence that at least one institution of this type continued to function until the reign of Seti I.[86] In fact, there seems to have been a period of grace following the end of Akhenaten's kingship during which his god was still the recipient of a cult, even though he himself was proscribed.[87]

[78] *PM* I², p. 672.

[79] See Freed, Markowitz, and D'Auria (eds), *Farao's van de Zon*, p. 286; H. Schneider, *Beeldhouwkunst in het land van de farao's* (Amsterdam, 1992), p. 63; Raven and van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara*, p. 55.

[80] For a survey of different opinions about the date of this object, see Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, pp. 25–6.

[81] See B. Gessler-Löhr, 'Pre-Amarna or Post-Amarna? The Tomb of the God's Father Hatiay at Saqqara', in L. Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2012), pp. 147–91.

[82] Löhr, *SAK* 2 (1975), pp. 186–7.

[83] J. Berlandini, 'Les tombes amarniennes et d'époque Toutânkhamon à Sakkara: Critères stylistiques', in J. Leclant (ed.), *L'Égyptologie en 1979: Axes prioritaires de recherches* 2 (Paris, 1982), pp. 199–200; Löhr, *SAK* 2 (1975), p. 187.

[84] See Kemp, *The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti*, p. 301; Raven and van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara*, p. 48 note 101.

[85] See J. Janssen, 'Two Variant Accounts?', *Varia Aegyptiaca* 1 (1985), p. 112.

[86] See Widmaier in Peust (ed.), *Miscellanea in honorem Wolfhart Westendorf*, p. 158 note 37; Schneider, *The Tomb of Iniuia in the New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis at Saqqara*, pp. 119–20; Raven and van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara*, p. 182.

[87] This explains why, for instance, in the tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara, he still bears the title 'greatest of seers of the Aten' in inscriptions belonging to phase III of the monument's decoration, which the excavators place in the reign of Tutankhamun. Inscriptions of this phase make frequent reference to Osiris and call the tomb owner *Wsir* NN. See e.g. Raven and van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara*, pp. 124–5.

5.3.4. Texts mentioning Osiris that are securely dated to the reign of Akhenaten

One unequivocal form of proof that an object or monument was inscribed in the reign of Akhenaten is if the king himself is named on it. This is true of a number of the items listed in section 5.3.2, so these at any rate cannot be redated to earlier or later periods. Where one finds references to Osiris in texts that can be attributed to Akhenaten's reign with certainty, a common assumption is that they must have been inscribed in the earlier part of it, before he changed his name from Amenhotep and began to focus exclusively upon the sun disk. This is certainly true of the tomb of Parennefer at Thebes, since the king is actually called Amenhotep in its inscriptions.[88] It could also be true of some of the other items in our list, for example, the jar sealings from the Saqqara tomb of Aper-El and the statue of the mayor of Nefrusi, since the inscriptions on them only refer to the king by his prenomen, which remained the same throughout his tenure of the throne, and thus could be early or late. However, the cartouche on the stela of Nakhtmin contains the name Akhenaten rather than Amenhotep, and thus cannot pre-date the king's fifth regnal year.

Also valuable for dating purposes is the presence on an object or monument of one of the longer forms of the Aten's name. Another reason we can be certain that the tomb of Parennefer was decorated in the first part of Akhenaten's reign is that its inscriptions employ the early form of the name of the Aten. The stela of Huy from Saqqara, on the other hand, must date to the second half of the king's reign because the beginning of the later form of the sun disk's name is preserved in an offering formula on the right jamb.[89]

Two other assumptions are frequently made about references to or depictions of Osiris from the reign of Akhenaten. The first is that they only occur on minor objects and thus reflect a continuation of popular belief in that deity as opposed to the official belief which had no place for him. The examples listed in section 5.3.2 show that this assumption is unjustified, since some references to Osiris occur on objects of high artistic quality made for officials who were of sufficient rank and position to be able to commission them. The second assumption is that all objects from the reign of Akhenaten on which Osiris is mentioned or depicted come from sites outside of Amarna, where the ban on other gods was not observed as strictly as it was in the capital itself. Broadly speaking, this seems to be true. Most of the evidence for veneration of Osiris that does come from Amarna is derived from minor objects. As noted in section 5.3.3, some of these may actually post-date Akhenaten's reign. Nevertheless, the example of the vessel found in a royal magazine on which the name of

[88] For the date of the tomb, see S. Redford, Review of A. Grimm and H. Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, in *JEA* 94 (2008), p. 320. According to her, the texts referring to Osiris and Anubis belong to the earliest phase of the tomb's decoration.

[89] Lacau, *CGC: Stèles du Nouvel Empire* 1, p. 223 and plate 69; Raven and van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara*, p. 50 note 123; Löhr, *SAK* 2 (1975), p. 178; Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, p. 19 note 131.

Amun was effaced while that of Osiris was left intact shows us that even in the court circles of Akhetaten the god did not lack for adherents.

A special category of evidence that we have not considered so far is the material found in KV 55, the tomb in the Valley of the Kings where some think the remains of Akhenaten were interred. This included canopic jars, indicating a belief in the efficacy of mummification.[90] Also found in the tomb were four magical bricks, two inscribed with hieroglyphic texts and two with hieratic. The former were written expressly for a king, who is named as 'Osiris of king Neferkheperure Waenre, justified', in other words, Akhenaten.[91] Equipment for performing the Opening of the Mouth Ritual was discovered in the tomb as well.[92] All of this might seem to indicate that the king had second thoughts about the religious changes he had introduced and their consequences for his posthumous welfare. But it is more likely that, as Gabolde suggests, these items were produced after Akhenaten's death by a successor who wished to rebury him in the traditional manner.[93] Thus they cannot be adduced as evidence for a return to belief in the Osirian afterlife on the part of the king himself.

5.3.5. Summary of evidence

As will be clear from the preceding paragraphs, the chief obstacle that confronts anyone searching for evidence of belief in Osiris during the Amarna Period is the inability of Egyptologists to date the relevant sources with a sufficient degree of precision. This is the same problem that we have encountered in earlier chapters as well. In the present case, the difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that some use the occurrence of the name of Osiris in a text as a dating criterion in its own right. If an inscription mentions the god then it either pre-dates or post-dates the Amarna Period; it cannot be a product of that time. Needless to say, if one adopts this view, then the search for evidence of belief in Osiris in the Amarna Period is doomed to failure before it begins. In analysing the material presented here, every attempt has been made to distinguish between what can be securely dated to the reign of Akhenaten and what cannot. Even when all the dubious and disputed items are removed from consideration, however, there remains a residue of evidence which is difficult to explain if one adheres to the conventional assumptions about the prevailing religious ethos at this time. This suggests that we should examine the question of Osiris's status during the Amarna Period more closely.

Given the distinctive features of Amarna religion enumerated in section 5.1.2, it is difficult to see how Osiris could have continued to play any part in the new doctrine. As

[90] Ibid., pp. 255–7. Fragments of a canopic chest were also found in the tomb of Akhenaten at Amarna itself. See Martin, *The Royal Tomb at El-'Amarna* 1, pp. 30–3.

[91] Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, pp. 257–8; Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 27; G. Daressy *apud* T. Davis, *The Tomb of Queen Tiyi* (London, 2010), pp. 26–7 and plate 22.

[92] Gabolde, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, pp. 258–60.

[93] Ibid., pp. 257–8. Cf. Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna*, p. 321.

we saw, Amarna religion leaves no place for any divinities other than the sun god and Akhenaten himself. Amarna texts emphasize empirical observation, what can be apprehended by the senses, in particular what can be seen with the eyes, and no living person could see Osiris or his kingdom of the dead. Amarna religion de-emphasizes mythology, the history of divinities, and Osiris was important precisely because of his history, in particular, the momentous event of his triumph over death which made it possible for his human followers to do the same. Finally, Amarna religion focuses upon the present, the here and now. Where did this leave room for the hereafter or the god who presided over it? Despite these problems, there are some who maintain that Akhenaten did find a place for Osiris in his religious doctrine, even in its most fully developed form, and it is this claim that we will investigate now.

5.4. AKHENATEN AS OSIRIS IN THEBAN TOMB 136?

5.4.1. Description of the tomb and its statuary

The starting point of our investigation is a private tomb at Thebes, TT 136, described in 2005 by Alfred Grimm and Hermann Schlögl.[94] This tomb belonged to a royal scribe, whom they identify with the royal scribe and chief steward Ipi who lived during the reign of Akhenaten.[95] The basis for their identification is a text on the right side of the entrance, in which they discern the traces of the name Ipi, and a figure of the tomb owner below this with a cartouche behind it, which Grimm and Schlögl think encloses the prenomen of Akhenaten.[96]

According to the published plan,[97] this tomb consists of four chambers, the first of which is a transverse hall. Originally this had four pillars arranged in a single row with a standing figure before each one. Both the pillar and the figure on the far left as one enters the tomb (IV) are now completely destroyed. Of the figure in front of the first pillar to the right of this (III), nothing but fragments remain. Only the lower part of the figure before the pillar on the far right (I) has survived.[98] The best preserved figure is the one before the second pillar from the right as one enters the tomb (II), although a glance at the published photographs of this will suffice to show that 'best preserved' here is a relative term.[99]

[94] *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*.

[95] For bibliography on this official, see D. Salvoldi, 'Some Remarks on TT 136 and its Interpretation', *EVO* 31 (2008), p. 39.

[96] Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, pp. 1–2 and plates 4–6.

[97] Ibid., plate 2. Compare Salvoldi, *EVO* 31 (2008), p. 45, figure 2.

[98] Salvoldi, *EVO* 31 (2008), p. 40, describes the figure before pillar I as 'almost complete', but this does not appear to be the case in the photograph that he publishes ibid., p. 46, figure 3.

[99] Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, plate 8; Salvoldi, *EVO* 31 (2008), p. 46, figure 3.

5.4.2. Interpretation of standing figures in TT 136 as representations of Akhenaten as Osiris

According to Grimm and Schlögl, enough survives of the figure in front of pillar II to show that it is an image of Akhenaten.[100] The figure leans against the pillar, the arms are crossed over the breast, and originally the hands held a crook and a flail. On the right wrist are the remains of a band, which they think may have been inscribed with the name of the Aten. They believe that the figure was wearing the *nemes*-headdress, a symbol of royalty, with a uraeus attached to the front of it. Traces of this serpent are still visible on its forehead. The figure wears a kilt. The upper body is bare, and the belly is rounded. Grimm and Schlögl compare this figure with colossal statues of Akhenaten found at Karnak. These were originally set up in the temple known as Gempaaten in that sacred precinct. None survives intact. To judge from the extant fragments, there were at least thirty-five such statues originally.[101] They believe that a figure of this type stood before each of the four pillars in the transverse hall of TT 136.

Grimm and Schlögl identify such figures as 'Osirispfeiler-Figuren', or 'Osiris-pillar figures'.[102] On the basis of iconography, they claim that they are Osirian representations of Akhenaten. They maintain that the king neither proscribed nor ignored Osiris as others have said, but rather deliberately took over his functions and characteristics, even retaining the god's traditional iconography, so that in effect he became a new Osiris for his subjects, removing any need for the old one. Specifically, they maintain, Akhenaten was identified with Osiris as the son of the Aten.

5.4.3. Reasons for rejecting the interpretation of the standing figures in TT 136 as representations of Akhenaten as Osiris

Although this interpretation has been accepted by some,[103] others have not been slow to point out some of its more problematic aspects. One is the attribution of TT 136 to a man called Ipi. A more recent inspection of the inscriptions in this tomb by Salvoldi has shown that Grimm and Schlögl's reading of this name is impossible.[104] Thus we do not know the name of the tomb's owner, and there are no grounds for connecting him with the royal scribe and chief steward Ipi attested in other sources. Scepticism has also

[100] Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 4.

[101] On figures of this type, see L. Manniche, *The Akhenaten Colossi of Karnak* (Cairo, 2010); D. Arnold, 'From Karnak to Amarna: An Artistic Breakthrough and its Consequences', in Seyfried (ed.), *In the Light of Amarna*, pp. 145–8.

[102] Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, pp. 7–8, 12, and 26.

[103] See, for example, Manniche, *The Akhenaten Colossi of Karnak*, p. 91. A. Spalinger, 'The Rise of the Solar-Osirian Theology in the Ramesside Age: New Points d'Appui', in B. Rothöhler and A. Manisali (eds), *Mythos & Ritual: Festschrift für Jan Assmann zum 70. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 2008), pp. 257–61, accepts the idea that the figures represent Osiris, but not Akhenaten in the form of that god.

[104] Salvoldi, *EVO* 31 (2008), pp. 42 and 47, figure 5.

been expressed about the cartouche allegedly enclosing the prenomen of Akhenaten. Its position behind the buttocks of the tomb owner is anomalous, and according to one view the supposed traces within the cartouche may be fissures in the stone rather than actual writing.[105] Salvoldi, in his inspection of the tomb, found no evidence of a cartouche at all, and suggests that it may have been covered over with mud plaster or destroyed.[106] Finally, the idea that the statues in the transverse hall represented Akhenaten has been called into question as well. This identification is based chiefly upon the rounded belly of the surviving figure and the band on its right wrist, both of which are paralleled in better preserved statues of that king. However, statues from the final decade of the reign of Amenhotep III display similar rounded bellies and swollen hips. Moreover, doubts have been raised as to whether the wrist band is actually present on the surviving figure.[107] Thus there are no certain grounds for attributing the tomb to the reign of Akhenaten. Others have assigned it to the nineteenth dynasty.[108]

Even if TT 136 could be dated securely to Akhenaten's reign, however, and the figures in its transverse hall identified beyond doubt as representations of him, Grimm and Schlögl's claim that they depict the ruler as Osiris would still be untenable. The use of terms like 'Osiride' or 'osiriaque' to describe a certain type of standing royal statue has a long history in Egyptology. It can be traced back to the nineteenth century.[109] Statues of this sort are attested not only in the Amarna Period but before and after it as well. We have already considered some eleventh and twelfth dynasty examples in section 4.9.7, where it was demonstrated that they do not depict the king in the form of Osiris. In fact, their inscriptions refer to the ruler as 'beloved of Osiris', thus making a clear distinction between him and the deity.

5.4.4. So-called 'Osiride' statues of Akhenaten and other kings

Grimm and Schlögl compare the surviving figure from TT 136 with the colossal statues of Akhenaten found at Karnak. The first person to describe these as 'osiriaque' was Chevrier.[110] But what is really distinctively Osirian about such statues? Clearly they do not resemble any known figures of Osiris, and in fact, there have been many different interpretations of them in addition to the one linking them with that deity. Some think that they are images of the Aten or realistic portraits of Akhenaten himself. Others think that they depict the god or the ruler as a bisexual primordial creator, Kamutef, or Hapi. A different view is that the colossi are actually statues of Amenhotep III that were

[105] See the anonymous review of Grimm and Schlögl's book in *JANER* 8 (2008), p. 132.
[106] Salvoldi, *EVO* 31 (2008), p. 43. [107] Anonymous reviewer, *JANER* 8 (2008), p. 133.
[108] See *PM* I², p. 251. Likewise, Friederike Seyfried (personal communication 4.11.2014) says that the tomb is definitely Ramesside.
[109] See C. Leblanc, 'Piliers et colosses de type "osiriaque" dans le contexte des temples de culte royal', *BIFAO* 80 (1980), p. 69.
[110] See H. Chevrier, 'Rapport sur les travaux de Karnak (Mars-Mai 1926)', *ASAE* 26 (1926), p. 122; H. Chevrier, 'Rapport sur les travaux de Karnak (Novembre 1926-Mai 1927)', *ASAE* 27 (1927), p. 146.

usurped by Akhenaten. They have also been interpreted as visual representations of time, showing the Aten at different stages of development: gestation in the womb, infancy, and maturity. Not everyone agrees that all of the statues depict the same person or deity. According to one theory, they represent the members of a divine triad: Atum, Akhenaten, and his wife Nefertiti, the latter two in the forms of Atum's offspring Shu and Tefnut. Finally, some argue that the Egyptians themselves may have accepted more than one of these interpretations as valid.[111]

So-called Osiride figures can be divided into different categories. Some examples do show the king in a long shroud like that of Osiris, with crossed arms and wearing the white crown, but as we have seen this does not mean that they represent him in the form of that god. Christian Leblanc has argued convincingly that the so-called Osiride figures are actually associated with the *sed*-festival.[112] Each of the different costumes that they show the king wearing can be associated with a different episode in that event. The connection with the *sed*-festival is evident from the inscriptions on the pillars associated with these statues.[113] None ever refers to the king as Osiris. Instead they treat him as a living being. Moreover, so-called Osiride statues are found in conjunction with other figures clearly showing the king while alive, and in a range of different types of temples, not just mortuary temples. Such statues normally stand in peristyle courts where they are exposed to the life-giving rays of the sun. Their purpose, as the texts associated with them make clear, is the regeneration of the king in his lifetime.

Leblanc has noted that when the king is shown wearing a kilt, as he is in the case of the Karnak colossi of Akhenaten, the pillars or columns associated with his figure have an open flowering plant capital. When he is shown wearing a shroud, however, the columns have a closed bud capital.[114] Thus statues showing him in the shroud are not funerary. Rather they depict the king in an embryonic state, like a bud that has not yet opened. By contrast, those showing the ruler in a kilt or ceremonial loin cloth depict him in the full possession of his renewed powers as a result of the rites performed during the *sed*-festival. In the Amarna Period, the king is never shown wearing a shroud. Instead, nude representations seem to correspond to the shrouded ones attested in the statuary of other reigns, since they too are found in association with closed bud capitals.[115] Therefore, in the Amarna Period we have a contrast between statues that show the king nude and those that show him in a kilt. The latter portray him fully rejuvenated and renewed, the former in the embryonic state that precedes renewal. If we accept that the surviving figure in the transverse hall of TT 136 is actually meant to represent Akhenaten, then the fact that it has a kilt means the king is depicted in a living and fully renewed state, not as Osiris. Consequently there can be no question of his identification with that divinity.

[111] For a historical survey of the different interpretations that have been proposed for the Karnak colossi, see Manniche, *The Akhenaten Colossi of Karnak*, pp. 85–115.

[112] Leblanc, *BIFAO* 80 (1980), pp. 69–89.

[113] Ibid., pp. 82–5. Cf. A. Gulyás, 'The Osirid Pillars and the Renewal of Ramesses III at Karnak', *SAK* 36 (2007), pp. 31–48.

[114] Leblanc, *BIFAO* 80 (1980), pp. 87–9.

[115] Ibid., pp. 79–80 and 88–9.

However, the statuary from TT 136 is not the only evidence that Grimm and Schlögl adduce in support of their view that Akhenaten deliberately took over the functions, characteristics, and iconography of Osiris, identifying himself with that god as the son of the Aten. They also cite a range of other objects, including stelae, paintings on the walls of tombs, and shabtis. In the paragraphs that follow we will examine and assess this additional evidence, to see whether or not it supports the view that they have advanced.

5.5. OTHER EVIDENCE FOR AKHENATEN AS OSIRIS?

5.5.1. Depictions of Osiris with the features of Akhenaten?

Stela Munich ÄS 51 was inscribed for a man called Nena and is said to have come from Memphis.[116] Its top register depicts the deceased owner presenting offerings to a triad of seated divinities: Osiris, Harendotes, and Isis.[117] The accompanying label identifies Osiris as 'ruler of eternity, lord of everlastingness, king of the gods'. He also appears as a donor in the offering formula in the bottom register of the stela, along with Anubis and other deities associated with the afterlife. The text in that register concludes with a spell in which the deceased identifies himself with Thoth and claims to know what is in the sky and in the earth.

Grimm and Schlögl say that Osiris is shown with the features of Akhenaten on this stela and therefore it must date to his reign. In particular, they draw attention to the length of the deity's neck and the angle formed by it and his head, which they say are characteristic of representations of Akhenaten. According to them, the depiction of the god in this way is supposed to signify the king's assumption of his functions and status.[118] They attribute the stela to the early part of Akhenaten's reign, before other deities began to be proscribed. In support of this view, they cite the fact that the word *mw.t*, 'mother', is still written with the vulture hieroglyph, rather than alphabetically as it was later on in the Amarna Period.[119]

Another representation of Osiris which Grimm and Schlögl claim displays the features of Akhenaten occurs in a painting in the tomb of Nu and Nakhtmin at Deir el-Medina (TT 291).[120] Here too, they point to the elongated neck of the god and the angle formed by it and his head as proof of this identification. A stela inscribed for Nakhtmin, now in Turin (N. 50011), was discovered in a niche in this tomb. In its top

[116] For bibliography, see Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, pp. 12–13 note 58.

[117] Ibid., plates 20–1; Dyroff and Pörtner, *Aegyptische Grabsteine und Denksteine aus süddeutschen Sammlungen* 2, plate 14.

[118] See discussion in Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, pp. 12–20.

[119] Ibid., p. 18.

[120] See ibid., pp. 14–15. The scene of Osiris is reproduced in plate 22.

register, his father is depicted in adoration before an enthroned Osiris and Anubis.[121] On stylistic grounds, Grimm and Schlögl date this tomb and its contents to the period of Akhenaten's reign following his move to Amarna.

The two authors go on to list several other examples where they think Akhenaten is depicted as Osiris. These occur on stelae in Turin, Vienna, Munich, Copenhagen, London, and Manchester.[122] In most cases, a deceased individual is shown presenting offerings to or in adoration before the god. As with the examples discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the presumed resemblance of Osiris to Akhenaten in these scenes provides a basis for attributing the stelae to his reign. One particularly interesting example is Stela Vienna ÄS 5899, of uncertain provenance. The top register of this shows the owner of the object, a certain Nebshai, in adoration before an enthroned Osiris, behind whom stand Harendotes and Isis.[123] One of the other individuals portrayed on the stela has a name which incorporates that of Osiris, *Wsir-(m)-ḥ.t*. The noun *mw.t*, 'mother', is written alphabetically rather than with the vulture sign on the stela, which leads Grimm and Schlögl to date it to the latter part of Akhenaten's reign. This is in contrast to most of the other examples cited by them, the majority of which they assign to its earlier part.

How valid are the claims made by Grimm and Schlögl? Does Osiris really have the features of Akhenaten in the representations that they cite? If so, does the depiction of the god in this way really signify that the king identified himself with that god and assumed his functions and status? It has to be said first of all that deciding whether or not Osiris actually has the features of Akhenaten in any of these representations is bound to be a subjective matter. What one person accepts as a strong resemblance may not be perceived as such by others. My own view is that there is little resemblance between the appearance of Osiris in the examples collected by Grimm and Schlögl and that of Akhenaten in the reliefs depicting him that they cite by way of comparison. This is especially evident if one compares the painting of the god from the tomb of Nakhtmin with the block from Karnak showing the king that they juxtapose one above the other on plate 22 of their monograph.

That several of these representations of Osiris display the influence of Amarna style is a less controversial proposition, and in fact, a number of those who have discussed them previously have pointed this out.[124] But saying that they have been influenced by Amarna art and saying that they depict Osiris with the features of Akhenaten are two very different things. At Akhenaten's death, those sculptors and artists who had become fluent in the new style did not simply retire or disappear. They continued

[121] Ibid., plate 27; M. Tosi and A. Roccati, *Stele e altre epigrafi di Deir el Medina n. 50001–n. 50262* (Turin, 1972), pp. 44–7 and 265.

[122] See Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, pp. 14–15 and 20–2.

[123] Ibid., plate 31; M. Hüttner and H. Satzinger, *Stelen, Inschriftsteine und Reliefs aus der Zeit der 18. Dynastie* (Mainz am Rhein, 1999), pp. 113–19.

[124] See e.g. references cited in Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, pp. 13–14 and 20.

working, and that is why we find a considerable number of reliefs and paintings that post-date the Amarna Period but still follow some of its artistic conventions.[125]

Most others who have studied the representations of Osiris discussed here prefer to date them either to the late (i.e. post-Amarna) eighteenth dynasty or to the early nineteenth dynasty, as is clear from the citations of the original publications of them in the footnotes of Grimm and Schlögl's discussion. These later datings are more convincing, since they make it possible to account for stylistic, prosopographical, and other features that would be anomalous in productions of the reign of Akhenaten.[126] The view that these depictions must have been produced under his rule is based mainly on the premise that they show Osiris with that king's features. Since there is no compelling reason to accept this premise, the argument for attributing them to the time of his kingship is deprived of its chief support.

But Grimm and Schlögl also cite certain features of the texts accompanying the representations of Osiris discussed here which they think are indicative of a date in the Amarna Period. Here too, the evidence will not withstand close scrutiny. One such feature, already noted above, is the alphabetic writing of the noun 'mother' in a label on Stela Vienna ÄS 5899, which they argue is a sign that the object belongs to the second half of Akhenaten's reign. In fact, however, alphabetic writings of the noun in question are attested not only at this particular time, but before and after it as well.[127] Likewise, as we have seen, the occurrence of personal names incorporating that of the Aten in some texts cannot be used as evidence that they date to the Amarna Period, since names of this type continued in use into the early nineteenth dynasty.[128]

Even if it could be demonstrated that Osiris was depicted with the features of Akhenaten in these representations, would this prove that the king had assumed his functions and status? The evidence at our disposal shows clearly that it would not. In the New Kingdom it was a common practice to depict deities with the features of the reigning king.[129] Conversely, kings could be depicted with the iconographic attributes of a deity.[130] Grimm and Schlögl themselves cite examples where they think Osiris is portrayed with the features of Amenhotep III, and Ptah and Amun-Re with those of Tutankhamun. On one stela, they claim, both Osiris-Sokar and a deceased person presenting offerings to him are shown with the features of Ay.[131] One would hardly argue on this basis that the ruler in question sought to identify himself with the owner of the stela. Furthermore, in some New Kingdom tomb chapels both the tomb owner

[125] See Schneider, *The Tomb of Iniuia in the New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis at Saqqara*, p. 120; Berlandini in Leclant (ed.), *L'Égyptologie en 1979* 2, pp. 199–200.

[126] Cf. the review of Grimm and Schlögl's book by M. Eaton-Krauss in *BiOr* 63 (2006), p. 525; also the anonymous review in *JANER* 8 (2008), p. 133.

[127] See *Wb*. 2, 54.

[128] See section 5.3.3.

[129] Manniche, *The Akhenaten Colossi of Karnak*, pp. 85–6 and 91.

[130] J. Malek, 'Old-Kingdom Rulers as "Local Saints" in the Memphite Area during the Middle Kingdom', in M. Bárta and J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Prague, 2000), p. 242.

[131] Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 14.

and his wife are depicted with the features of the reigning king.[132] Here too, any thought of identification is out of the question.

5.5.2. References to justification and a perfect mummification/burial in stelae from Amarna

As further support for their view that Akhenaten took over the functions and attributes of Osiris, Grimm and Schlögl cite a group of stelae found in the tomb of a man called Any at Amarna, now in Cairo.[133] He was a scribe in the temple of the Aten and chief steward of the palace. The stelae in question were dedicated to the tomb owner by friends. All but one depict the donor in the act of presenting offerings to him. The inscriptions on these stelae contain what the two authors describe as 'formulas with an Osirian stamp'. The specifically Osirian features which they identify in them are the epithet *mꜣʿ-ḫrw*, 'justified', applied both to the deceased and to the dedicator of one of the stelae, and references to a *qrs.t nfr.t*, 'perfect mummification/burial'. The latter can be designated more specifically as a 'perfect mummification/burial in Akhetaten'. In some of the stelae it is expressly stated that Any is 'justified through a perfect mummification/burial'.[134]

It is not clear why Grimm and Schlögl regard either of these features as Osirian. They think that the epithet 'justified' implies the survival of the concept of the judgement of the dead before Osiris, only now with Akhenaten in the role of divine judge. Maat is certainly a very important concept in the Amarna Period, as is shown by the frequent statements in texts of this time that the king lives on Maat. But there is no evidence to suggest that it or justification were linked in any way with Osiris. In the tomb of Meryre II at Amarna, for example, he is called 'justified in Akhetaten'.[135] Aper-El is called 'justified in the west of Memphis' in his tomb at Saqqara.[136] Meryre, also buried at that site, is called 'justified in the beautiful west'.[137] The tomb of Huya at Amarna is called a 'mansion of justification'.[138] In no case is there any reference to the ruler of

[132] B. Bryan, 'The Disjunction of Text and Image in Egyptian Art', in P. Der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* 1 (Boston, 1996), p. 167.

[133] Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 19. Cf. N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 5 (London, 1908), pp. 9–11 and plates 21–3; G. Steindorff, 'Vier Grabstelen aus der Zeit Amenophis' IV.', *ZÄS* 34 (1896), pp. 63–9; Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna*, pp. 148, 247, 265, 313, and 325–6.

[134] For the connection between mummification and justification, see section 4.15.4.

[135] N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 2 (London, 1905), plate 36; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 32, line 6.

[136] A. Zivie, 'Une tombe d'époque amarnienne à Saqqarah', *BSFE* 84 (1979), pp. 27–8 with figure 3. Cf. Hornung, *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*, p. 99; Hornung, *JARCE* 29 (1992), p. 49.

[137] Löhr, *SAK* 2 (1975), p. 173 and plate 6; Berlandini in Leclant (ed.), *L'Égyptologie en 1979* 2, p. 196, figure 32; Raven and van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara*, p. 107.

[138] Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 3, plate 2; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 34, line 3.

the underworld. Texts like these emphasize where an individual was justified, not by whom.[139]

Evidently justification was no longer dependent on Osiris or any other god in the official ideology of this time. Instead, whoever was loyal to the king would be justified. So the fact that people in tombs of the Amarna Period are described as such need not imply that they had undergone a traditional Osirian judgement and obtained this status from Akhenaten acting in the role of Osiris. Although justification in that god's tribunal was firmly established as an Egyptian aspiration for the afterlife by the time the Amarna Period began, we should remember that the epithet 'justified' did not originally relate the deceased to Osiris.[140] In the Pyramid Texts, for instance, this status connects them with the sun god more frequently than with any other specific named deity.[141] In detaching it from Osiris, therefore, Akhenaten may not have been innovating so much as he was returning to an earlier conception of justification.[142]

The same applies to the desire for a perfect mummification/burial expressed on the stelae found in Any's tomb. Here too, there is nothing specifically Osirian. As we saw in earlier chapters, attempts to preserve the corpse were already being made in predynastic Egypt.[143] Although mummification was by no means widespread in the early dynastic period or the Old Kingdom, the practice had nevertheless evolved well before the first appearance of Osiris in the historical record.[144] Mummification/burial (*qrs*) is already attested as one of the boons sought in the offering formulas of the fourth dynasty, again prior to the rise of Osiris.[145] Even after that god begins to figure as a donor in such formulas, it is Anubis rather than him who is normally requested to provide this.[146] As the evidence cited in section 5.2 demonstrates, the preservation of the corpse remained an important concern during the Amarna Period. However, this reflects a conception of the afterlife that actually pre-dates Osiris rather than one specifically connected with him.[147]

5.5.3. Shabtis of the Amarna Period

Finally, Grimm and Schlögl point to shabtis as evidence for their view that Akhenaten assumed the functions and status of Osiris during the Amarna Period. According to them, shabtis of ordinary individuals from this time display the facial features of

[139] Cf. Reiche in Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen*, p. 210.

[140] Cf. A. Tillier, 'À propos de *nṯr nfr* comme épithète divine: Contribution à l'étude d'Osiris-roi au Moyen Empire', *RdE* 62 (2011), p. 163; R. Anthes, 'The Original Meaning of *mꜣʿ-ḫrw*', *JNES* 13 (1954), pp. 21–51.

[141] See sections 3.9.3 and 4.15.1; Anthes, *JNES* 13 (1954), p. 46.

[142] Cf. section 5.1.2.

[143] See especially section 1.2.1.

[144] Sections 2.1.1 and 3.4.2.

[145] See W. Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel* (Glückstadt, 1968), p. 9.

[146] Ibid., pp. 15 and 25.

[147] Cf. Widmaier in Peust (ed.), *Miscellanea in honorem Wolfhart Westendorf*, p. 155.

Akhenaten, and therefore of that king as Osiris.[148] They also claim that shabtis from the royal tomb at Amarna are not traditional ones, but Osirian figures that portray Akhenaten as that god and vice versa.[149] But these assertions are not really supported by the evidence. If the facial features of private shabtis do resemble those of Akhenaten, why is this specifically Akhenaten as Osiris? As shown in the preceding sections of this chapter, there are no grounds for connecting the king with that god. Furthermore, the shabti figure is quite separate from Osiris in the Amarna Period. This is demonstrated by the numerous examples of spells inscribed on private shabtis that make reference to the Aten but not to him.[150] So representations of Akhenaten in shabti form do not constitute proof that he was identified with Osiris.

At Amarna, shabtis have been found in a variety of contexts. Many come from tombs, but some were found in residential areas of the city.[151] Thus they are attested outside the funerary sphere. Since shabtis were not always placed in tombs in the Amarna Period, the view that they related solely to the hereafter may be too simplistic.[152] To judge from the texts inscribed on them, shabtis had two main functions at this time. On the one hand, they represented the dead, thereby preserving their identity and allowing them to receive offerings and participate in various posthumous activities like worshipping the Aten.[153] On the other hand, they were supposed to act as servants, performing work when summoned to do so.[154] Neither function presupposes belief in a specifically Osirian afterlife, so there is no reason why the continued employment of shabtis during the Amarna Period should be viewed as evidence for such a conception.

5.6. OSIRIS IN THE AMARNA PERIOD: SUMMARY AND NEW PERSPECTIVES

5.6.1. Rejection of view that Akhenaten assumed the functions and characteristics of Osiris

We have spent some time investigating the claim made by Grimm and Schlögl that Akhenaten neither proscribed nor ignored Osiris, but rather deliberately took over his functions and characteristics, even retaining the god's traditional iconography, so that in effect he became a new Osiris for his subjects, removing any need for the old one. The evidence for their view is chiefly iconographic, consisting of what they claim are two- and three-dimensional depictions of Akhenaten in the form of Osiris. But as we have seen, in cases where an unambiguous representation of that king is involved, it is

[148] Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 25.
[149] Ibid., pp. 28–9. [150] Martin, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), pp. 111–15.
[151] Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna*, p. 94.
[152] Ibid., p. 96; Widmaier in Peust (ed.), *Miscellanea in honorem Wolfhart Westendorf*, p. 156.
[153] See e.g. Martin, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), pp. 111–13. [154] Ibid., pp. 114–15.

not actually in the form of Osiris, while in cases where we have an unambiguous representation of Osiris, there is no obvious connection with Akhenaten. In particular, there are no convincing examples where the god is depicted with the facial features of the king, contrary to what Grimm and Schlögl maintain.

Other problems with their view have become apparent as well, not least the fact that the dating of many of the objects that they cite in support of it to the reign of Akhenaten is questionable, if not impossible. Nor do references to justification and a perfect mummification or burial in texts of this period prove that the king had assumed the functions and status of Osiris, since there is nothing specifically Osirian about these. The same applies to shabtis, both royal and non-royal. Again, there is no connection with Osiris. So despite all the evidence marshalled by Grimm and Schlögl, there is no real basis for thinking Akhenaten ever identified himself with that god.

5.6.2. Significance of the amount of surviving evidence for the persistence of belief in Osiris and the Osirian afterlife in the Amarna Period

Even if we reject their view, however, it has still been a worthwhile exercise to explore the evidence for continued belief in Osiris as god of the dead during the Amarna Period. As we have seen, this is more abundant than one might have expected. Nor is it confined to a few specific geographical areas or years within Akhenaten's reign. Was he aware of this survival and, if so, was it a matter of concern to him? If it was, then the king's ability to influence developments in the religious sphere and, in particular, the beliefs of his subjects concerning the afterlife, may have been more circumscribed than is generally supposed. This would conform to the pattern that we have already observed in previous chapters dealing with earlier periods of Egyptian history.

We should remember, moreover, that what we have focused upon is written and iconographic evidence for belief in Osiris during the Amarna Period, that is to say, evidence that leaves a concrete trace in the archaeological record. But this is hardly the entire picture. We have no way of tracking belief in the Osirian afterlife when this was not set down in writing or expressed through images. The reign of Akhenaten, as far as we can judge, lasted approximately seventeen years. Of those officials who publicly espoused his new religious doctrines during his lifetime, many continued to be professionally active after his demise. We can assume that in their youth they had absorbed the traditional beliefs about the hereafter, and now they reverted to these without compunction.

The different stages of this process are neatly illustrated by a monument like the tomb of the greatest of seers of the Aten Meryneith at Saqqara. The excavators of this have divided its decoration into three phases.[155] The first two, which were carried out

[155] Raven and van Walsem, *The Tomb of Meryneith at Saqqara*, pp. 47–9 and 176–86.

while Akhenaten was still alive, reflect the afterlife conceptions of that king. But in the third phase, which they attribute to the reign of Tutankhamun, a reversion to more traditional ideas is apparent. Inscriptions of this phase make frequent reference to Osiris and the tomb owner is called *Wsir* NN.[156] Does this reversion imply a genuine change of heart on his part or does the decoration of phase III simply express beliefs that he had maintained all along? The same question can be asked about numerous other officials who served Akhenaten. What were their real beliefs about the afterlife? Were they the same as those that they publicly espoused? Unfortunately we have no way of finding the answers to these questions.

5.6.3. Was the distinction between this world and the next one really abolished during the Amarna Period?

Despite uncertainties of this sort, the nature of the evidence we have surveyed is such that it should make us rethink some of our fundamental assumptions about the afterlife in Amarna religion, for example, the idea that Akhenaten thought only in terms of a single world, this one, inhabited by both the living and the dead.[157] References to the west and to the underworld in texts of this time, some of which are found in tombs of high-ranking officials at Amarna itself, suggest otherwise. Thus an inscription in the tomb of Suti requests that he be allowed to go forth from the underworld (*dwꜣ.t*) at dawn to see the Aten as he rises each day without ceasing.[158] A text in the tomb of Ay says that he will pass freely through the doors of the underworld.[159] An inscription in the tomb of Meryre I requests that he be endowed with the status of *akh* in the underworld.[160]

This last reference is particularly significant, since it shows that the term 'underworld' denotes a real place in Amarna sources and is not just a euphemism for 'tomb' or 'burial chamber' as some have interpreted it.[161] *Akhs* did not spend their time sleeping in their tombs. Rather they led an active, dynamic existence. It was also an interactive one, since the status of *akh* has a social aspect and identifies those who have

[156] See, for example, ibid., pp. 124–5.

[157] For this 'one world' interpretation of Akhenaten's ideas, see e.g. Grimm and Schlögl, *Das Thebanische Grab Nr. 136 und der Beginn der Amarnazeit*, p. 11; J. Assmann, *Tod und Jenseits im alten Ägypten* (Munich, 2001), pp. 18 and 295–7; Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom*, p. 174; Hornung, *JARCE* 29 (1992), p. 48; Reiche in Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen*, pp. 204 note 3, 214–15, and 217; von der Way, *ZÄS* 123 (1996), p. 161; Hesse, *Die Privatgräber von Amarna*, p. 84.

[158] N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 4 (London, 1906), plate 39; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 58, lines 8–9.

[159] N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 6 (London, 1908), plate 33; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 101, lines 16–17.

[160] Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 1, plate 34; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 4, lines 12–13.

[161] Compare Hesse, *Die Privatgräber von Amarna*, p. 84; K. Pflüger, 'Beiträge zur Amarnazeit', *ZÄS* 121 (1994), p. 129; also Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, p. 185, who translates the occurrence of *dwꜣ.t* in the tomb of Suti as 'burial chamber'.

acquired it as members of a group.[162] The fact that Meryre names the underworld as the sphere in which he desires to be an *akh* means that it must have been envisaged as a place where the deceased could enjoy social interaction with others, just as it was in earlier and later periods of Egyptian history.

5.6.4. Was Akhenaten really regarded as the sole guarantor of the afterlife?

Another idea that does not really withstand close scrutiny is that Akhenaten was the sole guarantor of the afterlife during the Amarna Period.[163] Supposedly his subjects looked exclusively to him to ensure their posthumous existence because the Aten was a remote, unapproachable deity with no real interest in their individual welfare.[164] In fact, that god had a more prominent part to play in afterlife aspirations than has been realized heretofore. People addressed prayers and requests relating to the next world to him, just as they did those pertaining to this one.[165] In his tomb at Amarna, for example, Mahu asks the Aten to give him a perfect mummification/burial after he has reached old age.[166] In the tomb of Pentu, that deity is invoked as a donor in offering formulas and the tomb owner addresses a long hymn to the Aten asking that he be allowed to rest in his place of eternity, go forth from and enter his tomb without his *ba* being hindered in its desires, promenade as he wishes on earth, and drink water at the shore of his pool every day.[167] In the tomb of Meryre I there are several short prayers addressed to the Aten in which he is asked to confer various benefits upon the tomb owner. These include a good funeral, the provision of a tomb chapel, allowing the *ba* of the tomb owner to rest upon his corpse, permitting him to enter and leave the tomb, causing his flesh to live, letting him breathe the north wind, and supplying him with offerings, in addition to granting him the status of *akh* in the underworld, which has already been mentioned in section 5.6.3.[168]

The Aten is also the focus of a number of wishes in offering formulas of the Amarna Period. These provide eloquent testimony of the deceased's desire to see and worship

[162] M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), p. 5. Cf. a text from the tomb of Ay where he is said to be 'at the forefront of the *akhs*' (Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 6, plate 33; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 100, line 10).

[163] See section 5.3.

[164] See section 5.1.2.

[165] For prayers and requests relating to this life addressed to the Aten, see Bickel, *JANER* 3 (2003), pp. 39–45.

[166] Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 4, plates 27–8; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, pp. 53, lines 4–5, and 54, lines 5–6.

[167] Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 4, plates 2 and 4; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, pp. 47–9.

[168] Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 1, plate 34; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, pp. 3–4.

the sun disk, follow him and kiss the earth before him and his rays.[169] Even where the king is the object of devotion, it is often the Aten who is requested to ensure that the dead enjoy proximity to their ruler, thus mediating between them. A text in the tomb of Tutu at Amarna, for example, asks that the sun disk permit him to see the king, let his arms worship him, his ears hear his voice, and have the *ka* of the ruler in his presence.[170] As Martin has noted, the status of Osiris and other deities in the Amarna Period, as well as attested survivals of earlier funerary rituals and equipment at that time, would repay a closer study and analysis.[171] He was referring to traditional Egyptian gods, in particular those associated with the afterlife. But his words apply with equal force to the new divinity introduced by Akhenaten.

There is abundant evidence that the Egyptians of this period looked not only to the king for fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations for the afterlife, but to the Aten as well. Far from being a remote and impersonal deity, he was seen as a benefactor who could be approached with confidence for assistance at every stage of the transition from this life to the next, from burial to transfiguration into an *akh*. The continuation of belief in the status of *akh* presupposes the existence of *sakhu* or glorification spells, since it was through their recitation that the deceased were endowed with it. Unfortunately, we have no idea of what Amarna Period glorification spells were like, since no actual specimens have been preserved. In a text accompanying the depiction of Huya's mummy in his tomb at Amarna, he is told: 'One will invoke you with/during the rites of the Aten' (*ni̯s.tw n=k m nt-ʿ ỉtn*).[172] Conceivably this might be a reference to glorification spells involving the sun disk, but it could also mean that the deceased will be summoned to participate in the offering rituals performed daily in the deity's temple.

5.6.5. Return to TT 136

Before we leave the Amarna Period, a brief return to Theban Tomb 136 and its statues is in order. There is one other interpretation of them that should be mentioned. As we have seen, Spalinger is one of those who accepts the view of Grimm and Schlögl that these effigies are Osirian in nature.[173] He also notes that the entrance to the tomb faces east, so that the sun's rays would illuminate it each morning. He thinks that when this happened there was a re-enactment of the union between Re and Osiris that took place in the underworld each night, which some refer to as the solar-Osirian unity. The sun would shine on the pillars representing Osiris just as Re united with Osiris in the underworld. Thus a union between the Aten and Osiris occurred. Akhenaten acted as

[169] Reiche in Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen*, pp. 205 and 212–13.
[170] Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 6, plate 15, line 6; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 76, lines 10–11.
[171] Martin, *MDAIK* 42 (1986), p. 110 note 9.
[172] Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna* 3, plate 22; Sandman, *Texts from the Time of Akhenaten*, p. 43, line 10.
[173] Spalinger in Rothöhler and Manisali (eds), *Mythos & Ritual*, pp. 257–61.

an intermediary, according to Spalinger. The presence of his Osirian statues in the tomb helped to ensure that its occupant had access to the sun's rays. This interpretation can be discounted since, as we have seen, there is no reason to think that the statues in TT 136 portrayed Osiris or had anything to do with that god. However, Spalinger's theory takes us neatly to the second problem that we will consider in this chapter: the solar-Osirian unity and its significance for the dead.

5.7. THE NOCTURNAL ENCOUNTER OF RE WITH OSIRIS IN THE UNDERWORLD

Among the beliefs that were abandoned during the Amarna Period was the complex of ideas pertaining to the solar deity's nocturnal passage through the underworld.[174] According to the Egyptian view, the sun god sailed through the sky in his bark each day, set in the western horizon in the evening, entered the underworld, and was towed through it by the denizens of that region. At a certain point in his nocturnal journey he encountered and temporarily united with Osiris. This momentary union had a positive effect on both deities. Re subsequently emerged newly born at the eastern horizon each dawn, ready to sail through the sky once again, while Osiris remained in the underworld awaiting their next encounter, his body rejuvenated as a result of his contact with the sun god.[175]

As we saw in section 4.14.3, this conception becomes especially prominent in the New Kingdom, when it is illustrated in the so-called guides to the underworld, texts and images that depict the sun's nocturnal course through that region, and in the Book of the Dead.[176] As a result, some identify it as a product of that time, although others believe that it arose earlier. Moreover, some maintain that there was a further development which took place during the course of the New Kingdom. The conception of the nocturnal union between Re and Osiris changed. No longer was it regarded as a cyclically recurring event of limited duration which took place at a certain point each night. Instead it was seen as a permanent union, effectively creating a new god, a single entity conjoining both Re and Osiris in a way that was totally unprecedented. This new conception is called the solar-Osirian unity in Egyptological literature.

A number of questions present themselves for consideration here. First, is the idea of a nocturnal merger between Re and Osiris in the underworld exclusively a New Kingdom phenomenon as some maintain? Second, did this really develop into what

[174] See section 5.1.2.

[175] See E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca, 1982), pp. 95–6; D. Luft, *Osiris-Hymnen: Wechselnde Materialisierungen und Kontexte* 1 (Tübingen, forthcoming).

[176] For a good basic introduction to the underworld guides, see E. Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife* (Ithaca, 1999), pp. 26–151, with bibliographical notes on pp. 170–82. The Book of the Dead is described ibid., pp. 13–22, with bibliography on pp. 165–8. See also S. Quirke, *Going Out in Daylight—prt m hrw: The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, Translation, Sources, Meanings* (London, 2013).

certain modern scholars describe as the solar-Osirian unity and, if so, when? Third, what effect did all of this have on the relationship between Osiris and the deceased? Were they ever identified with Re, Osiris, or both? Fourth and finally, did the relationship between Re and Osiris benefit all the deceased equally or only a select group among them? We will devote the remainder of the present chapter to exploring these questions.

5.7.1. Guides to the underworld and their date of composition

The guides to the underworld include the Amduat, Book of Gates, Book of Caverns, Book of the Night, the Book of the Earth, and the Litany of the Sun. The earliest direct evidence for one of these compositions comes from the tomb of the eighteenth dynasty ruler Tuthmosis I in the Valley of the Kings (KV 38), where fragments of the Amduat were discovered.[177] The first substantially complete copies of that composition are to be found in the tombs of Tuthmosis III (KV 34) and one of his viziers, Useramun (TT 61).[178] The latter also preserves a copy of the Litany of the Sun, the earliest version known.[179] The texts in Useramun's tomb are significant because they show that from their earliest attestations, underworld guides were in use by non-royalty as well as royalty, even though most extant New Kingdom examples of compositions of this type are preserved in the tombs of kings.[180] Further evidence for the non-royal use of the Litany of the Sun at this time is provided by the fact that portions of it are incorporated in some Book of the Dead spells.[181]

[177] E. Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat* 1 (Geneva, 1987), p. x; G. Daressy, *CGC: Fouilles de la Vallée des Rois (1898–1899)* (Cairo, 1902), pp. 303–4 and plate 57; K. Myśliwiec, *Studien zum Gott Atum* 1 (Hildesheim, 1978), pp. 268–9 and plates 19–20; E. Wente, 'Mysticism in Pharaonic Egypt?', *JNES* 41 (1982), p. 164.

[178] For the former, see Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat* 1, p. xi; A. Fornari and M. Tosi, *Nella sede della verità: Deir el Medina e l'ipogeo di Thutmosi III* (Milan, 1987), pp. 49–129; F. Abitz, *Pharao als Gott in den Unterweltsbüchern des Neuen Reiches* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1995), pp. 4–5. For the latter, see Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat* 1, pp. x–xi; E. Dziobek, *Die Gräber des Vezirs User-Amun: Theben Nr. 61 und 131* (Mainz am Rhein, 1994), pp. 42–7, with plates 9–16 and 28–35; Abitz, *Pharao als Gott in den Unterweltsbüchern des Neuen Reiches*, p. 20.

[179] E. Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei) nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches* 2 (Geneva, 1976), p. 9; Dziobek, *Die Gräber des Vezirs User-Amun*, pp. 42–7, with plates 9–16 and 28–35.

[180] S. Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs: The Culture of Life and Death* (Chichester, 2011), pp. 188–9, notes that Useramun also had two physically separate monuments to serve his needs in the afterlife (TT 61 and TT 131). With rare exceptions like him and his near contemporary Senenmut, only kings appear to have been provided for in this manner.

[181] E. Hornung, 'Ein königliches Fragment von Totenbuch 180', in *Hommages à François Daumas* (Montpellier, 1986), pp. 427–8; R. Lucarelli, *The Book of the Dead of Gatseshen: Ancient Egyptian Funerary Religion in the 10th Century BC* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 69–71; N. Billing, 'Re-Assessing the Past: Context and Tradition of the Book of the Dead, Chapter 181', in B. Backes, I. Munro, and S. Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen: Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuch-Symposiums 2005* (Wiesbaden, 2006), p. 10; A. Piankoff, *The Litany of Re* (New York, 1964), p. 60.

A careful study of the textual transmission of the underworld guides by Werning has shown that the references to the deceased in them are all secondary.[182] They do not appear in the earliest known versions. This has led him to postulate that texts like the Amduat were originally cosmographic compendia rather than funerary compositions. Thus their initial context of usage was in the temple, not in the tomb or for the afterlife. This view is supported by statements in some compositions, notably the Amduat, to the effect that it is useful for people to have knowledge of their contents while they are still alive.[183] It was a well-established belief in ancient Egypt that performance of cultic service in this world could benefit the performer in the next one, and an effective means of proving one's credentials in this sphere was to demonstrate knowledge of the texts employed in the cult.[184]

As if to emphasize this point, the Book of Gates spells out the posthumous benefits of performing cultic service for the inhabitants of the underworld during one's lifetime in considerable detail.[185] See, for example, statements like 'The one who offers to them on earth is a possessor of offerings in the west'[186] or 'The one who offers to them on earth is one who sees light in the underworld.'[187] The point made in both is that one's pious actions in this life are reciprocated in the next. Wente interprets such statements to mean that those who presented offerings to underworld beings on earth could actually join their company while still alive,[188] but if this were the case then one would expect to find the qualification 'on earth' at the end of the second part of the statement rather than the first part.

As noted in the preceding section, some believe that the idea of a nocturnal merger between Re and Osiris in the underworld arose prior to the New Kingdom. A few would trace it back as far as the Old Kingdom. There are also those who maintain some of the underworld guides were composed as early as that period. In section 4.14.3, we examined the evidence for such views. This took various forms, both textual and archaeological. The conclusion reached in that section was that there was no compelling reason to think that any of the underworld guides were composed prior to the New Kingdom. Nor was it possible to document the existence of a fully worked out concept of a nocturnal union of Re and Osiris in the underworld at such an early date, although the idea that the sun god entered that region at night already features in some Coffin Text spells. It may be that evidence will emerge one day which sheds further light on the origins of this concept.

[182] D. Werning, 'An Interpretation of the Stemmata of the Books of the Netherworld in the New Kingdom—Tomb Decoration and the Text Additions for Osiris NN', in J.-C. Goyon and C. Cardin (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists* 2 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2007), p. 1942. See also J. Roberson, *The Awakening of Osiris and the Transit of the Solar Barques: Royal Apotheosis in a Most Concise Book of the Underworld and Sky* (Fribourg and Göttingen, 2013), p. 132.

[183] See Wente, *JNES* 41 (1982), pp. 163–7.

[184] Cf. section 4.15.3.

[185] Wente, *JNES* 41 (1982), pp. 167–75.

[186] E. Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 1 (Geneva, 1979), p. 254.

[187] Ibid., p. 287.

[188] Wente, *JNES* 41 (1982), pp. 174–5.

5.7.2. Egyptian models for conceptualizing the nocturnal encounter of Re and Osiris in the underworld

How should we understand the union between the sun god and Osiris which is said to take place each night in the underworld? One model that the Egyptians themselves used to explicate it was that of the *ba* and the corpse. The *ba* of the deceased enjoyed complete freedom of movement. It could enter or leave the realm of the dead at will. But it returned to the corpse each night and breathed upon it, thereby preserving it and renewing its powers. Then the two separated again until the next night. The same could be said of Re and Osiris, with the former being envisaged as the *ba* and the latter as the corpse.[189]

But the union could also be conceptualized as one involving the *bas* of the two gods, resulting in a 'united' or 'composite' *ba*. The Egyptian term for this was *bꜣ dmḏ*, which is used with reference to other pairs of divinities as well.[190] Something is *dmḏ* if it is formed of two or more members or components.[191] These do not cease to have an independent existence, however. Nor does their association in such a composite form preclude any of them from involvement in associations of other kinds concurrently. Both Re and Osiris, for example, can participate in syncretistic and other types of union with a range of different divinities at the same time that they are linked together as a *bꜣ dmḏ*.[192] They can even be involved in other types of relationship with each other, as will be seen in the paragraphs that follow.

The point that the constituent members of such a composite retain their independence is neatly illustrated by a passage in the Abydos Stela of Ramesses IV where the king addresses Osiris with these words: 'When Re appears each day, he arrives at the underworld to exercise governance for this land and for the (other) lands as well, while you also sit like him. One calls you (plural) together "composite ba" (*bꜣ dmḏ*). The majesty of Thoth stands beside you (plural) to record the decrees that issue from your (plural) mouths. As for all that you (plural) say, you (plural) are as one mouth.'[193]

[189] Compare a text inscribed on a pillar in the tomb of Ramesses VI (KV 9) where Amun-Re says to the king: 'Your *ba* is destined for the sky like Re, your corpse for the earth like Osiris' (A. Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI* [New York, 1954], plate 65a). In the first division of the Book of Caverns, Re says that he causes *bas* to rest upon their corpses when he has rested upon his own corpse (D. Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch: Textkritische Edition und Textgrammatik* 2 [Wiesbaden, 2011], pp. 22–3). In the sixth hour of the Book of Gates, a group of underworld beings tells Re: 'You cause breathing when you rest upon your corpse which is in the underworld' (Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 1, p. 228). Further references to Osiris as the corpse of Re are cited in J. Yoyotte, *Histoire, géographie et religion de l'Égypte ancienne* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2013), pp. 72–4; J. Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott* (Berlin, 1969), p. 102 note 63; and S. Wiebach-Koepke, *Phänomenologie der Bewegungsabläufe im Jenseitskonzept der Unterweltbücher Amduat und Pfortenbuch und der liturgischen 'Sonnnenlitanei'* 1 (Wiesbaden, 2003), pp. 190–5 and 234–5.

[190] C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 2 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), p. 708.

[191] *Wb*. 5, 457–9.

[192] See, for example, A. Piankoff and N. Rambova, *Mythological Papyri* (New York, 1957), pp. 88–90 (no. 7), where the *bꜣ dmḏ* of Re-Osiris (or Re and Osiris) is mentioned alongside Re-Horus, Re-Harakhti, Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, and Re and Osiris on their own.

[193] K. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Historical and Biographical* 6 (Oxford, 1983), pp. 22, line 15–23, line 1; M. Korostovtsev, 'Stèle de Ramsès IV', *BIFAO* 45 (1947), pp. 157–8 and plate 1.

Although *bꜣ dmḏ* is treated as a singular noun in some other texts,[194] the fact that second person plural pronouns rather than singular ones are used to refer to it in this passage demonstrates clearly that here it is not seen as a single entity but rather as two fully independent ones linked together. The statement that the gods who constitute the *bꜣ dmḏ* are said to speak 'as one mouth' has been interpreted by some to mean that they are regarded as a single entity,[195] but this ignores the idiomatic nature of the expression *m rꜣ wʿ*, which actually means 'of one accord, in agreement'.[196] In this passage, just as in the rest of the stela's text, Re and Osiris are distinct deities, as the plural pronouns show, but they act together in full accord, with Re as the one in overall charge. To the extent that this constitutes a union, it is one of wills rather than persons.

Further examples illustrating the degree of autonomy implied by the term *dmḏ* are provided by a mythological papyrus dating to the twenty-first dynasty. In two passages, the deceased wishes to assume all the forms that she desires in the underworld, being like the *bꜣ dmḏ* of Re-Osiris (or Re and Osiris), the great god, foremost in the west at Abydos, Wennefer residing in Coptos. But she also requests that her *ba* be allowed to go to the sky like the *ba* of Re while her corpse is in the underworld like the *ba* of Osiris.[197] A variant of this in another papyrus of the same date states that the gods will allow the deceased's *ba* to go to the sky like the *ba* of Re while her corpse is in the underworld like the *bꜣ dmḏ* of Osiris.[198] As these passages show, association as a *bꜣ dmḏ* still allows the two gods a significant level of independence, so much so that they can co-exist in different spheres of the cosmos as they are said to do here.[199]

A third way in which the Egyptians conceptualized the union between Re and Osiris was in terms of an embrace. Osiris is said to embrace Re. According to Abdelrahiem, discussing two scenes at Abydos showing Ramesses II embracing Osiris, this act signifies identification. When two figures embrace they are identified with each other.[200] That this view is incorrect is demonstrated by inscriptions on the wall adjacent to the scene discussed by him that clearly distinguish the king from the god, referring to him as 'beloved of Osiris' and stating that he built the monument for his father Osiris.[201] As Assmann has shown,[202] the true meaning of the embrace is rather different. It is an act of transmission, whereby a power or attribute is passed from one

[194] See e.g. K. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Historical and Biographical* 3 (Oxford, 1980), p. 152, lines 3–4 (there as an epithet addressed to Osiris).

[195] e.g. A. Spalinger, *The Great Dedicatory Inscription of Ramesses II: A Solar-Osirian Tractate at Abydos* (Leiden and Boston, 2009), p. 100; Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, p. 96.

[196] *Wb.* 2, 389, 10. Cf. the cognate demotic idiom *n wʿ rꜣ* cited in CDD, letter *r* (29/6/2001), p. 2, and W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen, 1954), p. 81.

[197] Piankoff and Rambova, *Mythological Papyri*, pp. 89–90 (no. 7, scenes 3 and 5).

[198] Ibid., p. 73 (no. 1, scene 2).

[199] Compare a text from the temple of Esna where even the sun and moon are described as *bꜣ.w dmḏ*. For this, see S. Sauneron, *Le temple d'Esna* 3 (Cairo, 1968), p. 154 (260, 7).

[200] See M. Abdelrahiem, 'The Inscriptions of the Alabaster Sanctuary of Osiris (Temple of Ramesses II at Abydos)', *SAK* 32 (2004), p. 4.

[201] Ibid., pp. 4–5.

[202] Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott*, pp. 103–5. Cf. Luft, *Osiris-Hymnen* 1 (forthcoming).

individual to another, a 'communion of spirits', as Frankfort has described it.[203] The embrace of Osiris and Re in the underworld involves a mutual exchange of the life-sustaining properties possessed by each god. Osiris is renewed by virtue of his contact with Re and Re in turn is transfigured by virtue of contact with Osiris.

The notion of an embrace (*ḥpt*) between the two gods is already found in Coffin Text Spell 335, although the act described there does not take place in the underworld and it is Osiris who comes to Re to initiate it rather than the reverse.[204] The result of this act is that the twin *bas* of Osiris come into existence.[205] The later version of this utterance preserved in Book of the Dead Spell 17 defines these as 'the *ba* of Re, the *ba* of Osiris, the *ba* which is in Shu, and the *ba* which is in Tefnut, his twin *bas* which are in Mendes'.[206] It is significant that the embrace of the two gods does not produce a single *ba*, but rather a composite entity analogous to the *bꜣ dmḏ* discussed previously.

A fourth way of describing the nocturnal encounter between Re and Osiris utilized the imagery of birth and rebirth. As a result of their meeting, Re was reborn as Horus. Thus he was, in effect, the offspring of Osiris.[207] This conception is well illustrated by a scene in the Book of the Earth which depicts a falcon-headed divinity with a sun disk behind him emerging from the body of Osiris. The accompanying legend explains this with the words: 'Horus emerges from the corpse of his father.'[208] A number of Egyptian sources describe Re rising at dawn each day in the form of a newly born infant, so the notion of his rebirth as Horus was easily integrated within this tradition.[209]

Finally, the union between Re and Osiris could be described by saying that one god came to rest or dwell in the other. The earliest such description occurs in the Litany of the Sun, where it is said: *ḫrw ḥʿw m štꜣy.t Rʿ pw ḥtp m Wsỉr ṯs pḫr*, 'The sound of acclamation is in the mysterious place. It is Re resting in Osiris and vice versa.'[210] The formula expressed in the second sentence there recurs, with minor variants, in Spells 15B, 180, and 182 of the Book of the Dead.[211] In the last of these spells, the deceased claims to be Thoth and asserts that he is the one who has caused the two deities to rest in each other.

Probably the best known illustration of this conception occurs in the tomb of Nofretari in the Valley of the Queens. There, a ram-headed mummiform deity

[203] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 32–3.

[204] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4 (Chicago, 1951), pp. 277–9. Cf. section 4.14.3.

[205] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, pp. 280a and 281a.

[206] E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie* 2 (Berlin, 1886), p. 58.

[207] See M. Smith, 'P. Carlsberg 462: A Fragmentary Account of a Rebellion against the Sun God', in P. Frandsen and K. Ryholt (eds), *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies* (Copenhagen, 2000), pp. 106–7.

[208] See J. Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth* (Atlanta, 2012), pp. 173 and 330. I think the reading *Ḥr* for the divine name here is more likely than the *bḥd.ty* proposed by him, although in either case a form of Horus is certainly involved.

[209] Smith in Frandsen and Ryholt (eds), *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies*, pp. 96–7.

[210] E. Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei) nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches* 1 (Geneva, 1975), p. 178.

[211] See Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott*, p. 411; Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie* 2, pp. 443 and 447.

identified as Re by a label near its head is tended by Isis and Nephthys. The figure of the god has the words 'It is Re resting in Osiris' on its right and 'Osiris resting in Re' on its left.[212] This scene recurs in two roughly contemporary private tombs at Deir el-Medina, TT 335 and 336.[213] The formula that normally accompanies it is also found in a third tomb, TT 290, where it appears above a representation of a young bull with a sun disk above it standing between two trees.[214] A variant of this formula, which foregrounds the benefits of the union for the deceased, occurs on the thirtieth dynasty sarcophagi of Tjahorpata and Djedhor: 'Re rests in Osiris in the west as the protection of the Osiris of NN. It is Osiris resting in Re in the underworld as the protection of the Osiris of NN.'[215] The latest known versions of it occur in two texts of Roman date, one in the temple of Deir el-Shelwit, the other in a papyrus from Thebes. The first says: 'Re rests in Osiris, the two gods are united in setting the land in order, since it had ceased to be done, and vice versa',[216] and the other says: 'It is Osiris resting in Re.'[217]

As Hornung has pointed out, the version of the formula accompanying the scene depicting the bull between the two trees in TT 290 says that the union of Re and Osiris takes place every day (*n r*ʿ *nb*).[218] In other words, it is not a permanent state but an act which is regularly repeated as part of the solar cycle. As he puts it, 'Re enters into Osiris and Osiris enters into Re daily, and the combination is dissolved again daily.' A further point, as Assmann has noted, is that this particular union has a starting point. It arises from a pre-existing duality.[219] Normal syncretisms do not have a starting point, they just are. Thus the nocturnal union of Re and Osiris is not a syncretism in the strict sense of the word, and Assmann prefers to use the term 'Zwei-Einigkeit' to describe it. Only in the case of the nocturnal union of Re and Osiris are we told how the two come to be combined with each other. Their merger is a dynamic process, not a static one. The formula 'Re resting in Osiris, Osiris resting in Re' has reference to an act, an event which recurs cyclically at a fixed moment each night, and not an atemporal, unchanging state.

[212] For a colour reproduction of this scene, see e.g. A. Siliotti and C. Leblanc, *Nefertari e la valle delle regine* (Florence, 1993), p. 135.

[213] B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1924–1925)* (Cairo, 1926), pp. 99 and 136, figures 67 and 92.

[214] For a colour reproduction of this scene, see R. Boulanger, *Egyptian Painting and the Near East* (London, 1966), p. 28 (lower).

[215] C. Manassa, *The Late Egyptian Underworld: Sarcophagi and Related Texts from the Nectanebid Period* (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 386–7 and plates 280A–B.

[216] C. Zivie, *Le temple de Deir Chelouit* 3 (Cairo, 1986), p. 84, lines 4–5.

[217] F.-R. Herbin, 'La renaissance d'Osiris au temple d'Opet *(P. Vatican Inv. 38608)*', *RdE* 54 (2003), p. 124 and plate 9, line 19.

[218] Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, p. 95. Cf. Boulanger, *Egyptian Painting and the Near East*, p. 28 (lower); Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1924–1925)*, p. 136. S. Onstine, 'The Relationship Between Osiris and Re in the Book of Caverns', *JSSEA* 25 (1995), p. 76 note 7, wrongly says that this adverb occurs in TT 336.

[219] Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott*, pp. 102–3. Cf. Luft, *Osiris-Hymnen* 1 (forthcoming).

5.8. SOLAR-OSIRIAN UNITY?

5.8.1. The compositions in the tombs of Tutankhamun, Ramesses VI, and Ramesses IX

Is there any evidence that this configuration of the relationship between the two gods gave rise to a radically new conception of Osiris, one in which he was joined permanently with the sun god, as some have maintained? In 2004, John Darnell published a book in which he studied a group of compositions in the tombs of Tutankhamun, Ramesses VI, and Ramesses IX.[220] He came to two main conclusions. The first was that all of the compositions were based on a single template, and the second that they shared a common theme, which he identified as the solar-Osirian unity.[221] According to his interpretation, the solar-Osirian unity is not simply the temporary union of the two gods in the underworld each night described in section 5.7.2, but something more substantial and permanent, resulting in a completely new type of deity, a super-god. He identified three particular figures in these compositions, each differing in appearance, as representations of this deity: a giant, cosmos-spanning Re-Osiris who emerges from the eastern horizon at dawn.[222] No longer is Osiris left behind in the underworld while Re emerges into the light, since the two of them are now totally fused into a single entity. As a result of this new conception, he claimed, it was a different kind of Osiris figure with whom the dead came to be associated, 'the victorious Osiris at the end of the nocturnal journey, already joined with Re in the east'.[223]

In a review of Darnell's book, however, Quack pointed out serious problems with this interpretation.[224] First he showed that the compositions studied by him were not produced from a single template since there are no parallels among them. They are unrelated, apart from the fact that they are concerned with what the sun god does in the underworld.[225] More significantly, Quack showed that the so-called solar-Osirian unity is not the main theme of the compositions. Their main themes are actually the sun god's journey through the underworld, which beings he meets in the course of it, and how he interacts with them.[226] The sun god is all-important, and Osiris much less so. The texts never speak of the union of Re and Osiris.[227] The latter, in fact, is only mentioned by name three times in the compositions studied by Darnell: twice in speeches attributed to the deceased king which are clearly secondary additions, and only once as a participant in the events that they describe. There, moreover, he is clearly distinguished from Re since the two deities are said to call to each other.[228] Some passages where Darnell discerns references to the solar-Osirian unity simply refer

[220] J. Darnell, *The Enigmatic Netherworld Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity: Cryptographic Compositions in the Tombs of Tutankhamun, Ramesses VI and Ramesses IX* (Fribourg and Göttingen, 2004).
[221] See ibid., pp. 449–50.
[222] Ibid., pp. 374 and 423–4. Cf. Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, p. 31.
[223] Darnell, *The Enigmatic Netherworld Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity*, p. 452.
[224] J. Quack, 'Ein Unterweltsbuch der solar-osirianischen Einheit?', *WdO* 35 (2005), pp. 22–47.
[225] Ibid., p. 38. [226] Ibid., p. 39. [227] Ibid., p. 39. [228] Ibid., p. 36.

to the sun god.[229] Finally, none of the giant figures that Darnell thinks represent Re-Osiris are actually labelled as such, making this identification suspect. In fact, one is clearly labelled as the deceased king.[230]

There is no need to recapitulate Quack's thorough-going and convincing demolition of Darnell's ideas here. However, his critique requires us to ask what exactly is admissible as evidence of the supposed solar-Osirian unity and what is not. It seems reasonable to suggest that if a text is cited as evidence for this conception, then at a minimum, we should expect it to treat Re and Osiris as a single deity rather than two distinct ones, or to make reference in some way to the permanent union of those two gods. But many texts have been cited as evidence for the solar-Osirian unity, even though they do neither of these things. In the paragraphs that follow, we will look at the texts in question and evaluate them in the light of the criteria set out above.

5.8.2. Papyrus Westcar

In a study of Papyrus Westcar, Spalinger claims that there is an allusion to the solar-Osirian unity in a passage where the magician Djedi tells king Khufu, who has been seeking the number of the shrines or chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth in order to copy them for his pyramid, that this is to be found in a chest of flint in a room called 'inspection' in Heliopolis.[231] According to Spalinger, the chest in question contains the corpse of Osiris, and what the king is really seeking is information about the solar-Osirian unity, since he thinks that possession of this will ensure that he is restored to life in the hereafter.[232]

This interpretation is problematic for several reasons. One obvious difficulty is that the passage does not actually mention Re, Osiris, or any sort of union between them, permanent or otherwise. Another is that it states quite explicitly that the king is seeking something completely different to what Spalinger says he is seeking, thus directly contradicting him. Other sources do refer to a chest in Heliopolis that encloses the body of Osiris.[233] This corresponds to a similar chest in the underworld

[229] Ibid., p. 40.

[230] M. Stadler, 'Metatranszendenztheologie im Alten Ägypten: Pyramidentextspruch 215 und der ramessidische Weltgott', in S. Ernst and M. Häusl (eds), *Kulte, Priester, Rituale: Beiträge zu Kult und Kultkritik im Alten Testament und Alten Orient* (St. Ottilien, 2010), pp. 17–18, attempts to defend Darnell's identification of some of these figures as Re-Osiris against Quack's criticisms, but in my view the latter's argument remains persuasive. See further J. Quack, 'Anrufungen an Osiris als nächtlichen Sonnengott im Rahmen eines Königsrituals (Pap. Berlin P. 23026)', in V. Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung: Eine Festgabe für das Neue Museum* (Berlin, 2012), p. 181 note 58.

[231] A. Spalinger, 'Osiris, Re and Cheops', *ZÄS* 134 (2007), pp. 173–84. For the passage in question (P. Westcar, 9/4–5), see A. Blackman, *The Story of King Kheops and the Magicians* (Reading, 1988), p. 11.

[232] Spalinger, *ZÄS* 134 (2007), pp. 173 and 176–9.

[233] See V. Altmann, *Die Kultfrevel des Seth: Die Gefährdung der göttlichen Ordnung in zwei Vernichtungsritualen der ägyptischen Spätzeit (Urk. VI)* (Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 63–7, 105, and 119; Yoyotte, *Histoire, géographie et religion de l'Égypte ancienne*, pp. 38–41; A. Wüthrich, *Éléments de théologie thébaine: Les chapitres supplémentaires du Livre des Morts* (Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 33–7.

itself.[234] Furthermore, the corpse of Osiris can be that of Re as well.[235] But the king is not interested in any of this. Furthermore, how would knowing the number of the shrines or chambers in the sanctuary of Thoth contribute to a better understanding of the solar-Osirian unity? Hornung, who has analysed this passage in some detail, thinks that these relate exclusively to the sun god.[236]

A third difficulty is that Spalinger seems to conflate two distinct conceptions in his discussion of this passage: that of Re's nocturnal encounter with Osiris as described in the Amduat and other guides to the underworld, and that of the solar-Osirian unity as outlined in the book by Darnell discussed in section 5.8.1.[237] These conceptions envisage two very different types of union between Re and Osiris, one temporary, the other permanent. Spalinger seems to ignore the difference between them. Even if one were to accept that the chest mentioned in Papyrus Westcar was the one that enclosed Osiris, and that he was being conceptualized as the corpse of Re in that text, why see there an allusion to the solar-Osirian unity as opposed to the temporary encounter between Re and Osiris described in the Amduat and elsewhere? This, as we have seen, actually configures the two deities as *ba* and body respectively.

5.8.3. The dedicatory inscription of Ramesses II at Abydos

In another study, this one devoted to the dedicatory inscription of Ramesses II in the temple of Seti I at Abydos, Spalinger discerns further references to the solar-Osirian unity. In fact, he characterizes that text as a solar-Osirian tractate.[238] In what sense does it qualify for such a description, however? At least this text, unlike Papyrus Westcar, does actually mention both Re and Osiris, but it always makes a clear distinction between them, showing that, as far as its composer was concerned, they were two totally separate deities. The following passages, which are only a selection from a larger number that could be cited, should be sufficient to prove the point.

In the texts accompanying a scene adjacent to the main inscription that depicts Ramesses II presenting Maat to Osiris, Isis, and Seti I, who is identified as 'Osiris of king Menmaatre, justified', Osiris refers to Re in the third person, thus distinguishing the sun god from himself.[239] Seti I tells his son that Re has assigned eternity to him while he himself (Seti) has been magnified by Osiris.[240] Ramesses, for his part, enumerates

[234] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 281–3.
[235] Yoyotte, *Histoire, géographie et religion de l'Égypte ancienne*, pp. 73–4.
[236] E. Hornung, 'Die "Kammern" des Thot-Heiligtums', *ZÄS* 100 (1973), pp. 33–5.
[237] See Spalinger, *ZÄS* 134 (2007), pp. 176–7, referring to the Amduat on the former page and to Darnell's book on the latter.
[238] See the title of his book cited in note 195.
[239] K. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Historical and Biographical* 2 (Oxford, 1979), p. 323, line 11.
[240] Ibid., p. 324, lines 2–3.

the pious acts he has performed for Osiris (not Re-Osiris) and asks various favours from him.[241]

In the titulary that introduces the main inscription, Ramesses is accorded epithets like 'given life like Re for ever' and 'beloved of Osiris, lord of Abydos'.[242] Amun-Atum is said to have rewarded him with millions of years amounting to the lifetime of Re in the sky.[243] The inscription itself relates how Ramesses stops in Abydos while returning from Thebes to his residence in the capital to present offerings to Wennefer.[244] He expresses the hope that Osiris will favour him with the lifespan of his son Horus.[245] The king goes on to outline his plans to complete the unfinished temple of Seti I. In response the royal companions deliver a lengthy eulogy, praising him and his devotion to his father.[246] In the course of this they mention Re by name six times and Osiris/Wennefer four times. Not once do they ever conflate the two gods or identify one with the other.

The inscription goes on to describe the benefactions made by Ramesses for his father's cult. A long speech addressed to Seti by his son follows. He enjoins him to rouse himself, his face turned to the sky to see Re.[247] He says that Seti rests in the underworld like Osiris while he (Ramesses) appears as Re to the *rekhit*-folk, occupying the throne like Horus the son of Isis.[248] He has come to see Seti's temple adjacent to (that of) Wennefer.[249] After informing his father that he has completed this edifice and provided it with fields, staff, ships, herds, and other necessities, he speaks about the deceased king's posthumous existence, telling him: 'Behold, you have entered the sky that you might follow Re, mingling with the stars and the moon. You rest in the underworld like its inhabitants beside Wennefer, the lord of eternity, your arms towing Atum in the sky and in the earth like the unwearying stars and the imperishable stars,[250] while you are the pilot of the bark of millions.[251] Re appears in the sky with your eyes upon his beauty, and Atum enters the earth with you among his following. You have entered the hidden chamber in the presence of its lord, and your movements are expansive in the underworld, having joined the Ennead of the god's domain.'[252]

In this passage, once again, Re and Osiris are clearly distinguished. Each god has his own sphere of existence, the sky for Re and the underworld for Osiris. Seti, just like the rest of the blessed deceased, can move freely from one sphere to the other. He can sail through the sky in the sun bark during the day, and when the solar deity enters the west he is among those who help to tow his vessel through the underworld. By virtue of his

[241] Ibid., p. 324, lines 5–8.
[242] Ibid., p. 324, line 11.
[243] Ibid., p. 325, lines 7–8.
[244] Ibid., p. 325, lines 9–12.
[245] Ibid., p. 327, lines 10–11.
[246] Ibid., pp. 329, line 5–331, line 2.
[247] Ibid., p. 332, line 1.
[248] Ibid., p. 332, lines 2–4.
[249] Ibid., p. 332, line 9.
[250] For 'in the earth' meaning in the underworld, see M. Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507* (London, 1987), p. 116. For the unwearying stars and the imperishable stars as the crews of the barks that transport the sun god through the sky and the underworld, see M. Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 180–1.
[251] Spalinger, *The Great Dedicatory Inscription of Ramesses II*, p. 78, wrongly interprets this to mean that Seti commands the sun bark.
[252] Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Historical and Biographical* 2, p. 333, lines 11–15.

acceptance among the gods who inhabit that region, he can move around in it without hindrance and enjoys unrestricted access to the place where Osiris dwells.

In response to the words of his son, Seti rejoices over his offspring's benefactions 'as an efficacious *ba* like Osiris' and extols his good deeds to Re-Harakhti and the gods who are in the underworld.[253] He says that Re has granted Ramesses an eternity of years on the throne and Osiris has requested the duration of the sky for him so that he can rise like Re in it each dawn.[254] Moreover, his limbs are healthy like those of Re in the sky.[255] Seti continues, telling his son that he has spoken to Re with a loving heart, asking him to grant Ramesses eternity on earth like Khepri, and that he has requested Osiris, on entering that god's presence, to double the lifespan of his son Horus for him. Re in the horizon of the sky has granted Seti's request, granting the king eternity and millions of jubilees.[256] When that god sails across the sky each day, he sees what Ramesses has done and is filled with joy, love for him pervading his body.[257]

Seti goes on to tell his son that Wennefer is a possessor of justification because of what he has done for him. The god has been awakened by the memory of the good deeds Ramesses has performed, and Seti's own heart is filled with joy because of the eternity that Osiris has decreed for him.[258] The king has repeated monument after monument for Osiris under Seti's supervision.[259] The deceased ruler concludes by saying that the birth of Ramesses was effected by Re himself and welcomes his son as a living Re for the *rekhit*-folk. Millions of jubilees are his, along with the lifespan of the lord of all.[260]

Here too, there is nothing that remotely suggests the solar-Osirian unity. Re and Osiris are scrupulously distinguished. Seti is able to communicate with both, making requests on behalf of Ramesses. Here he plays the role of a mediator between the divine world and this one, an intercessor for a living relative, well known from letters to the dead and cognate sources. The deceased king's requests are invariably addressed to each god separately, and when they are granted each god acts autonomously in fulfilling them. Re and Osiris are pleased with the things that Ramesses has done, and react with joy accordingly. Nevertheless each god reacts individually. In no case, does the text suggest that the two of them do so as a single entity.

The primary interaction in this document is between the living king, Ramesses II, and his deceased father Seti I. The former displays filial devotion towards the latter. In return, Seti asks the gods to reward his son. The two of them inhabit different spheres, this world and the land of the dead. In this respect, they are comparable to Re and Osiris respectively, and in fact the text makes such a comparison explicitly. But contrary to what Spalinger says,[261] at no point does it ever equate or identify Seti with Osiris. The two are always separate, as is demonstrated by the various ways in which

[253] Ibid., p. 334, lines 10–13.
[254] Ibid., pp. 334, line 15–335, line 1.
[255] Ibid., p. 335, line 2.
[256] Ibid., p. 335, lines 4–7.
[257] Ibid., p. 335, lines 9–11.
[258] Ibid., p. 335, lines 11–13.
[259] Ibid., p. 335, line 15.
[260] Ibid., p. 336, lines 7–9.
[261] Spalinger, *The Great Dedicatory Inscription of Ramesses II*, p. 100.

they interact. On the one hand, Osiris magnifies Seti, while on the other, Seti requests favours of Osiris, rests beside him, and enters the hidden chamber in his presence. In this way the text simply confirms what we already know from other evidence, not least the name of the Osireion, the structure built by Seti I immediately behind the temple on whose walls it is inscribed: 'Menmaatre, life, prosperity and health, is beneficial for Osiris'.[262]

The dedicatory inscription of Ramesses II certainly alludes to the nocturnal journey of the sun god through the underworld. Like other sources, it affirms that the deceased, in this case Seti, will be able to join the crew of Re's bark and help to convey him as he traverses that tenebrous region.[263] At no point, however, does it mention a union of Re and Osiris. Nor, despite the fact that the text makes frequent reference to both gods, does it ever treat them as a single entity. For these reasons, the inscription fails to meet the minimum criteria set out in section 5.8.1 for acceptance as evidence for the solar-Osirian unity.

5.8.4. The Book of the Earth

Another source which has been interpreted as evidence for this conception is the complex of texts and representations known collectively as the Book of the Earth, attested from the nineteenth dynasty onwards.[264] According to Roberson, these illustrate the principle of the solar-Osirian unity as well.[265] A close scrutiny of the texts and representations in question, however, suggests otherwise. Here too, Re and Osiris are always clearly distinguished. One scene preserved in the tombs of Ramesses VII and Ramesses IX, for example, shows the corpse of Osiris in an oval-shaped sarcophagus. In the accompanying text, the sun god describes the scene to his followers from a vantage point above the cavern containing the sarcophagus.[266] In another scene found only in the tomb of Ramesses IX, four female figures are shown lamenting over a mummy in an oval-shaped sarcophagus. The accompanying text describes them as mourning over the mysterious mound of Osiris *dbꜣ-dmḏw*.[267] Re is said to call out to them, instructing them to continue their display of grief. He then praises the *ba* of Osiris and illuminates the darkness that pervades his mound.[268]

In a text preserved in the tomb of Ramesses VI, Re speaks to Osiris and tells him that he is passing above his cavern and assures him that his (Osiris's) heart will breathe as a

[262] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, p. 28.
[263] Contra Piankoff, *The Litany of Re*, p. 50, the text does not say that Seti becomes Re and Osiris here.
[264] For the corpus of texts and scenes to which this designation refers, see Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 4–11.
[265] See ibid., pp. 31, 138, and *passim*.
[266] Ibid., pp. 223, 384, and 391.
[267] For this epithet of Osiris, see C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 7 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), pp. 529–30.
[268] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 247 and 389–90.

result of hearing his voice.[269] In another text from the same tomb, Re tells the gods who elevate his *ba* and those who elevate the *ba* of Osiris (two distinct groups) that he is passing above them, assigning forms to them, so that they can elevate the *ba* of Osiris for him, while those who are in the underworld rejoice for Osiris's *ba*.[270] In a third text from the tomb of Ramesses VI, Re addresses 'the gods who follow Osiris-Orion', informing them that he has protected that deity's *ba* and corpse.[271] A text preserved in the tomb of Ramesses IX records the words uttered by Re when he enters the corpse of Osiris. He claims that he has traversed the underworld to destroy the enemies of Osiris.[272] If the sun god is permanently united with Osiris in these passages, he, at any rate, does not seem to be aware of it.

A scene of particular interest appears in the tombs of Merenptah, Tawosret, Ramesses III, and Ramesses VI, as well as in some papyri and painted coffins of the twenty-first dynasty. This shows a bearded mummy lying below a solar disk and guarded by four deities. A falcon head projects downward from the bottom of the disk, with a vertical line extending between the top of the head and the midsection of the mummy.[273] The accompanying texts describe the mummy as 'the great god who is in his cavern', in other words, Osiris. A smaller label inside the mummy itself designates it as *ỉmy Rʿ*, 'that in which Re is', a clear allusion to the moment when Re and Osiris are conjoined as *ba* and corpse respectively which is mentioned in other guides to the underworld.[274] The falcon head emerging from the disk, although unlabelled, suggests the idea of the rebirth of the sun god in the form of Horus as a consequence of his nocturnal encounter with Osiris. The line extending from the falcon's head to the mummy is a beam of light entering the latter, according to one of the accompanying inscriptions.[275]

Here we undoubtedly have a union involving Re and Osiris, but it is not clear why this should be interpreted as the permanent one sometimes designated as the solar-Osirian unity. The scene configures the relationship between the gods in two different but complementary ways: as *ba* and body and as parent and offspring. Both are paralleled in descriptions and representations of the temporary, cyclically recurring union of the two deities known from the Amduat and other sources, so there is no reason to think that the latter is not depicted here as well. Confirmation that a temporary union is actually what is envisaged is provided by the texts that accompany the scene. Re is said to call out to the gods who guard the corpse of Osiris, and when he moves on to continue his journey, their *bas* (but not Osiris) fly after him.[276]

A point worth noting is that Osiris is not the only underworld deity with whom the sun god unites momentarily in the Book of the Earth. As we saw in section 4.14.3, one of the verbs used to describe this encounter is *ḫp*, 'pass through'. The sun god is said to

[269] Ibid., p. 328. [270] Ibid., pp. 330–1. [271] Ibid., pp. 352–3.
[272] Ibid., pp. 400–2. [273] Ibid., p. 269.
[274] Ibid., p. 270. For the *ba* of the deceased described as 'in' the corpse rather than on it, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 646 note 126.
[275] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, p. 365. [276] Ibid., pp. 364–5.

pass through the corpse of Osiris. But in the course of his nocturnal journey he passes through the corpses of other deities as well, for example, Tatenen.[277] Moreover, other deities can be said to unite with the solar disk in the underworld.[278] So this is by no means an act predicated solely of Osiris. While the temporary union of Re and Osiris is an important and, as we will see, even essential, event from a cosmic point of view, it is by no means a unique one.

Another important point to note when analysing compositions like the Book of the Earth is that one cannot rely solely upon iconography to identify the figures depicted in them. Osiris, for example, is often shown as a standing bearded mummiform figure wearing the white crown in Egyptian representations, but this does not mean that every figure of this type that one finds in the underworld guides can be identified as him. In one scene from the Book of the Earth, for example, four such figures are shown. However, the labels identifying them show clearly that none is Osiris.[279] Conversely, deities with a standard iconography may be depicted in unexpected or unusual forms in these compositions. A catfish-headed god in the third division of the Book of Caverns, for instance, has a caption identifying it as Osiris.[280] Thus, for an identification to be secure, a figure has to be clearly labelled.

Roberson, like Darnell, tends to identify any especially large figure as a representation of Re-Osiris, irrespective of whether or not it is labelled as such. Thus, in a no longer extant scene from the tomb of Ramesses III, he identifies a large standing mummiform figure as Re-Osiris, even though it is simply labelled 'the great god'.[281] The accompanying texts refer only to Re. They do not mention Osiris.[282] A scene preserved in the tomb of Ramesses VI and two later private tombs shows a large mummiform figure standing in the midst of four other deities. This too, Roberson thinks is Re-Osiris, even though the captions clearly identify the figure as Atum.[283] It should be emphasized that size alone is not a reliable criterion for identifying a figure as Re-Osiris, since other deities can be depicted in gigantic form as well. A good example occurs in a scene preserved in the tomb of Ramesses VI, which shows an enormous recumbent female mummy identified as 'the corpse of the one who annihilates'. This is in fact the largest single figure in the version of the Book of the Earth preserved in that tomb.[284]

On the basis of the evidence considered in this section, there is no reason to identify the complex of scenes and texts known as the Book of the Earth as a source for the so-called solar-Osirian unity. This work clearly distinguishes Re and Osiris from each other. Their relationship in it is one of interaction, not identification, with the sun god normally the active partner. In one case, allusion is made to a union of the two gods,

[277] Ibid., p. 370. [278] Ibid., p. 387. [279] Ibid., pp. 269–71.

[280] See Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch* 2, pp. 110–11; Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, pp. 66 and 68 with figure 12. Compare the second division of the Book of Caverns, where a group of catfish-headed gods are called 'lords of provisions who transform into Osiris' (Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch* 2, pp. 50–1).

[281] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 272–3.

[282] Ibid., pp. 310–11. [283] Ibid., pp. 274–6 and 369. [284] Ibid., pp. 277–9.

but this is temporary rather than a permanent one. When it is over, Re moves on to a different part of the underworld and Osiris is left behind.

One reliable test of whether or not a composition provides evidence for the conception of the solar-Osirian unity is to examine its final scene.[285] If this depicts Re and Osiris leaving the underworld together as a single entity, then one is justified in regarding that composition as evidence for the conception. If it does not, then one is not justified in regarding it as such. All extant versions of the final scene of the Book of the Earth show the sun god leaving the underworld by himself.[286] None depicts Osiris. The texts that accompany the final scene refer to Re and 'the great mysterious god of the underworld'. The latter is said to worship the former in his cavern, so there can be no question of a union between them.[287] Rather, the unnamed mysterious god is distinct from and subordinate to the solar deity. The results of this test support the conclusion already reached in the preceding paragraph: the Book of the Earth provides no evidence for the conception of the solar-Osirian unity.

5.8.5. The Amduat and the Book of Gates

The authors whose views have been considered so far agree in tracing belief in a permanent fusion of Re and Osiris at least as far back as the underworld guides of the eighteenth or nineteenth dynasties, if not earlier. A slightly different view is advocated by Niwiński. He distinguishes the earlier underworld guides like the Amduat and the Book of Gates, where he accepts that the union of Re with Osiris was only regarded as a temporary one, from later ones like the Book of Caverns, where he thinks that a permanent synthesis of those two gods was envisaged, as a result of which it was no longer Re but a new 'great god' incorporating both Re and Osiris who was thought to leave the underworld each dawn. Thus, according to him, ideas about the nature of the relationship between these deities underwent a process of development in the course of the New Kingdom.[288]

Niwiński is certainly correct in stating that the Amduat treats Re and Osiris as two separate divinities. In a speech to a group of underworld divinities at the end of the first hour of that composition, for instance, Re says that he will cause Osiris to breathe, and they in turn invite him to enter the place where Osiris is.[289] The introduction to the third hour of the Amduat says that Re addresses and governs those who are in the following of Osiris.[290] In another text from the same hour the sun god is said to command Osiris himself.[291] At the conclusion of that hour, Osiris praises Re in the

[285] Cf. E. Hornung, 'Zu den Schlußszenen der Unterweltsbücher', *MDAIK* 37 (1981), pp. 217–26.
[286] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 192–6.
[287] Ibid., pp. 307–9 and 312.
[288] See A. Niwiński, 'The Solar-Osirian Unity as Principle of the Theology of the "State of Amun" in Thebes in the 21st Dynasty', *JEOL* 30 (1987–8), pp. 90–1.
[289] Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat* 1, pp. 155 and 160.
[290] Ibid., pp. 271–3.
[291] Ibid., p. 293.

underworld and is said to be in his following.[292] At several points in the Amduat, moreover, Re addresses Osiris directly. At the end of the third hour, for instance, he tells him that his *ba* is destined for the sky and his corpse for the earth.[293]

The sixth hour of the Amduat is the one in which Re actually unites with his body,[294] although this is treated in a very allusive fashion. A text in the middle register of that hour says that he sails on the water and rows in a marsh close to the corpse of Osiris, but the label above the actual representation of the sun god's body in that register identifies it as 'the corpse of Khepri in his own flesh'.[295] Osiris himself is depicted twice in the sixth hour, once as a member of a group of nine seated deities in the top register and once as a member of a group of nine serpents in the bottom register.[296] In neither case does he appear to be a direct participant in the encounter between Re and his body.

Be that as it may, the twelfth and final hour of the Amduat makes it very clear that there is no permanent fusion of Re and Osiris in that text. Here too, the deities are totally separate. Osiris is depicted in the form of a mummy resting against the curved border at the end of the underworld in the bottom register of that hour, while Re is shown exiting the underworld in the middle one.[297] The texts of this hour state that it is Re who emerges in his bark in the eastern horizon to sail through the sky.[298] Osiris is not named among those who travel with him. Rather, the sun god 'passes him by', albeit not before bestowing life and breath upon him. The epithets addressed to Osiris here, 'foremost in the total darkness', 'foremost in his darkness', 'foremost of the westerners', and 'foremost in the underworld', provide unequivocal evidence that he is fated to remain behind in the subterranean land of the dead while the sun god goes forth into the light.[299]

Likewise, in the Book of Gates, Re and Osiris are clearly configured as two separate deities. This is evident from passages in which the former refers to the latter in the third person,[300] or in which other gods address or refer to Osiris as an independent deity in contexts where there is no obvious connection with Re.[301] The sun god also speaks to Osiris directly, as he does in the Amduat.[302] Other forms of interaction between the two deities are described as well. A text in the bottom register of the seventh hour of the Book of Gates, for instance, says that things grow in the fields of the underworld when Re shines upon the body of Osiris.[303]

[292] Ibid., pp. 321 and 324. [293] Ibid., pp. 333–4.

[294] E. Hornung, *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes* 2 (Wiesbaden, 1963), pp. 123–4; Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, p. 37.

[295] E. Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat* 2 (Geneva, 1992), pp. 485–6 and 502. Cf. E. Hornung, *Das Amduat: Die Schrift des verborgenen Raumes* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1963), sixth unnumbered plate.

[296] Hornung, *Das Amduat* 1, sixth unnumbered plate; Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat* 2, pp. 470 and 522.

[297] See e.g. Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, figure 87 between pp. 312–13; Hornung, *Das Amduat* 1, twelfth unnumbered plate.

[298] E. Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat* 3 (Geneva, 1994), pp. 795, 809–10, 813–14, 818–19, and 834–5.

[299] Ibid., pp. 842–4.

[300] See e.g. Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 1, pp. 111, 247, 266, and 269.

[301] Ibid., pp. 125–30 and 318–22. [302] Ibid., p. 267. [303] Ibid., p. 267.

The fifth hour of the Book of Gates incorporates a scene depicting the judgement hall of Osiris. Although the details of this differ from one version to another, all show Osiris seated at the top of a dais with nine stairs, each occupied by a different divinity. There is a balance before Osiris. A standing mummiform figure carries the beam on his shoulders. Four heads of bubalis antelope are suspended upside down from the roof of the hall. In one corner there is a standing figure of Anubis. Facing him is a boat with a pig and a monkey holding a stick in it. A second monkey, also holding a stick, appears in, in front of, or above the boat, depending on the version.[304]

According to Manassa, the scene of the judgement hall and its accompanying texts reflect the conception of the solar-Osirian unity.[305] Thus, she claims that the nine gods on the steps of the dais have a dual solar-Osirian nature.[306] However, a label identifies these deities as 'the Ennead among whom Osiris is', or, according to a later variant, 'The Ennead who are in the following of Osiris'.[307] In neither version is there any reference to Re. But Manassa also identifies what she thinks are two other labels relating to this group of figures. The first reads '*akhs* who are in the west'. According to her, the fact that the deities on the steps are called *akhs* relates them to Re.[308] It is not clear why this should be the case. A more serious problem with her interpretation is that the words '*akhs* who are in the west' are actually unrelated to these figures, since they occur in the middle of a totally different text.[309] The latter does mention Re, saying that he rests in the underworld and penetrates the total darkness, but it contains no reference to Osiris.

Manassa's second label is a short text which most commentators have linked with the figure of Anubis in the corner of the scene, based on the proximity of the two.[310] According to her, however, it is a further caption relating to the nine gods on the steps.[311] This is improbable since the text in question is nowhere near them in any of the extant versions of the scene. She reads the text as *ḥʿy Rʿ ʿn m dšr.t* and translates 'The standing place of Re, having become beautiful in redness', which she interprets to mean that the sun god halts within the judgement hall to be vindicated against his enemies.[312] But in fact there is no reference to Re in this short text. The round sign that Manassa thinks is the sun disk representing that god's name is actually a different one. This is evident from the version of the judgement hall scene preserved in the tomb of Horemheb (KV 57), where the sun disk always has a dot in the middle of it which is

[304] For a selection of these, see E. Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 2 (Geneva, 1984), fifth unnumbered plate; C. Manassa, 'The Judgement Hall of Osiris in the Book of Gates', *RdE* 57 (2006), plates 15–17.

[305] Ibid., p. 122 note 87. [306] Ibid., p. 129.

[307] Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 1, p. 199; Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 2, p. 150.

[308] Manassa, *RdE* 57 (2006), p. 130.

[309] See Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 1, p. 197; Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 2, p. 149.

[310] Ibid., pp. 147–8. [311] Manassa, *RdE* 57 (2006), p. 130.

[312] Ibid., pp. 130–1, 137–8, and 141.

missing in the two round signs after *ḥꜥy*.[313] Likewise, in the version on the sarcophagus of Seti I, *ḥꜥy* is followed by two town-signs (Gardiner Sign-List O49), not sun disks.[314]

Nor is there any evidence to support Manassa's view that this scene represents the vindication of Re against his enemies. The only place that enemies are depicted or mentioned anywhere in it is in the space inside the dais on which Osiris is seated, thus directly below his feet. The caption relating to them calls them 'enemies of Osiris', not 'enemies of Re'. The adjacent text says of Osiris: 'His enemies are beneath his feet, while the gods and *akhs* are before him. He makes a reckoning among those of the underworld, consigning the foes to perdition and slaughtering their *bas*.'[315]

Manassa claims that what is actually weighed in the balance in the judgement hall scene is the *udjat*-eye, the restoration of which she thinks 'represents the template for the justification of Re in the underworld'. She explains the inconvenient fact that the scales of the balance are empty in the extant versions of this scene by saying that the eye is there but we cannot see it because it is invisible.[316] The same is true of ghosts, according to the belief of some, but this is not an argument which is likely to sway many.[317] Re's vindication against his enemies is actually proclaimed in some other sections of the composition,[318] so the argument that it was too portentous to be mentioned openly in this one lacks credibility.

Of the labels and other texts associated with the judgement hall scene in the Book of Gates, only one, which we have already discussed above, makes any reference to Re. This simply describes how he illuminates the underworld, and has no apparent connection with judgement. Nor does it relate the solar deity in any way to Osiris. In the rest of the scene the latter god acts alone, judging and inflicting punishment on those who have opposed him. Since Re and Osiris function independently of each other, there are no grounds for thinking that this scene reflects the solar-Osirian unity.

The twelfth and final hour of the Book of Gates is of particular value in demonstrating that there is no permanent union of the two gods in that composition. Re leaves the underworld to resume his daily journey through the sky. The bottom register of the twelfth hour depicts four gods wearing wigs and beards.[319] The accompanying text states: 'They are in this manner in this gate. They bewail Osiris after Re has emerged from the west, their *bas* travelling behind him while they (themselves) follow Osiris.'[320] This tells us ambiguously that Osiris remains in the underworld after Re's

[313] E. Hornung, *Das Grab des Haremhab im Tal der Könige* (Bern, 1971), plates 41–3.
[314] Manassa, *RdE* 57 (2006), plate 15.
[315] For caption and text, see Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 1, p. 200.
[316] Manassa, *RdE* 57 (2006), pp. 137–41.
[317] For further remarks on Manassa's interpretation of this scene, see M. Stadler, 'Judgement after Death (Negative Confession)', in J. Dieleman and W. Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2008), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/07s1t6kj, p. 3.
[318] See e.g. Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 1, pp. 283–5 (eighth hour).
[319] Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 2, twelfth unnumbered plate. The deities in question are the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth figures from the left.
[320] Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 1, pp. 396–7.

departure. The last scene of the Book of Gates actually depicts the goddess Nut emerging from the head of Osiris, helping to draw the disk of the sun into the sky.[321] Osiris himself performs this task in some other sources.[322] The accompanying text explains: 'It is Osiris, encircling the underworld.'[323]

5.8.6. The Book of Caverns

We can now turn to the Book of Caverns. Is the relationship of Re and Osiris in this text really different to their relationship in the Amduat and the Book of Gates as Niwiński claims? Does it really envisage a permanent synthesis of the two gods? In fact, the Book of Caverns, like the compositions just cited, always makes a clear distinction between Re and Osiris. In the first division of that work, for instance, the sun god announces repeatedly that he has entered the beautiful west to exercise governance for Osiris, dispatch his enemies to their abbatoirs, and issue commands to those who are in that god's following.[324] Elsewhere in the same division, Re addresses Osiris directly, telling him to give him his hand. He asserts that he governs those who dwell in the underworld and causes their *bas* to rest upon their bodies after he has rested upon his corpse.[325] The sun god makes frequent reference to Osiris in the third person, thus treating him as a distinct entity. In some instances he instructs various underworld guardians to defend Osiris against his enemies. In others, he addresses the god's foes himself and condemns them to punishment.[326]

In the second division of the Book of Caverns, Re recites a litany to Osiris, asking him to perform various services for the benefit of the deceased.[327] In the third division he speaks to Osiris again, telling him that he will care for him, illuminate his entourage with his disk, and extol his *ba* on his corpse. He identifies himself as the protector of Osiris and says that the latter will breathe when he (the sun god) passes through him.[328] Another scene in the same division depicts an ithyphallic Osiris lying prone within the coils of a large serpent with a sun disk above him.[329] The accompanying text describes how Re speaks to Osiris and causes his disk to rest in that god's cavern. It explains that the *ba* of Osiris is in the following of Re when exercising governance over those who are in the earth (i.e. in the underworld). The sun god tells Osiris: 'Behold, I pass through, O Osiris, and let my disk rest in your cavern. I protect your *ba* and your shadow.

[321] Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, p. 222; Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 2, p. 290. Cf. Wiebach-Koepke, *Phänomenologie der Bewegungsabläufe im Jenseitskonzept der Unterweltbücher Amduat und Pfortenbuch und der liturgischen 'Sonnenlitanei'* 1, pp. 280–5.

[322] Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 2, p. 292; Hornung, *MDAIK* 37 (1981), pp. 220–1; J. Assmann, *Der König als Sonnenpriester* (Glückstadt, 1970), p. 17; J. van Dijk, 'The Symbolism of the Memphite Djed-Pillar', *OMRO* 66 (1986), p. 14.

[323] Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 1, p. 410.

[324] Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch* 2, pp. 6–13, 20–1, and 26–7.

[325] Ibid., pp. 22–3.

[326] Ibid., pp. 34–41, 148–9, 152–3, 156–7, 320–3, and 364–71.

[327] Ibid., pp. 88–93.

[328] Ibid., pp. 104–7.

[329] Ibid., p. 126.

I dispel the darkness from you.' He concludes his speech with the words 'I pass over your cavern and give commands to those who are in your following.'[330]

Between the third and fourth divisions of the Book of Caverns, two long litanies are addressed to Re. These spell out in considerable detail the various things that he does when he passes through the underworld and praise him for his actions on behalf of those who dwell there. There is much emphasis upon his oversight of what happens in the realm of the dead: he governs its affairs, judges and issues commands to its inhabitants, and punishes the enemies of Osiris. He also provides the necessities of life, light, and breath for those who inhabit the west.[331] It is striking that these litanies do not mention any union, or indeed any form of direct interaction whatsoever, between Re and Osiris.

A scene in the fourth division of the Book of Caverns shows Osiris quickening into life with a sun disk above him and Isis and Nephthys standing on either side of him. In the accompanying text, Re encourages Osiris, endowing him with life and breath. He says that Osiris encircles the underworld with his arms as the two goddesses elevate his corpse.[332] Another scene in the same division shows Anubis, Osiris, and the *ba* of the latter god, with a sun disk above their heads. Re speaks to them, directs their affairs, and illuminates them with his disk. He tells them that he passes through their cavern and becomes their protector, with the *ba* of Osiris resting upon his corpse and Anubis ministering to him.[333]

Three further litanies intervene between the fourth and fifth divisions of the Book of Caverns. The first two are recited by Re himself, and describe what he does for the inhabitants of the underworld during his nocturnal journey through that region. He says that when his disk penetrates the darkness, Osiris stretches out his arms to him. Re cares for the *bas* of those who dwell in the west and causes them to rest upon their corpses. Likewise, he causes the great *ba* to rest upon the mystery, probably a reference to the nightly encounter between him and Osiris.[334]

A scene in the fifth division of the Book of Caverns depicts Osiris stretching out his hands in what looks like a gesture of adoration. There is a sun disk above him and four human-headed serpents behind him. The accompanying text states that he stretches his hands out to Re when he passes through the mysterious underworld.[335] In another scene from this division, Osiris is depicted as a large standing ithyphallic mummy with a *ba* bird on his head. The accompanying text describes how Re speaks to him and passes some time with him in order to minister to his needs. The *ba* of Osiris flies after the sun god when he moves on, and darkness envelopes his corpse once again.[336] The ensuing scene shows the sarcophagus in which the body of Osiris rests with a sun disk above it. The accompanying text describes how Re speaks with Osiris and illuminates

[330] Ibid., pp. 132–5. [331] Ibid., pp. 164–73.
[332] Ibid., pp. 184–5. For Osiris encircling the underworld, compare the final scene of the Book of Gates discussed in section 5.8.5.
[333] Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch* 2, pp. 198–9. [334] Ibid., pp. 208–21.
[335] Ibid., pp. 240–3. [336] Ibid., pp. 264–5.

him with his disk. Re tells the underworld gods that he has set his 'hiddenness' (scil. the corpse of Osiris) in order and it is now complete. That god is concealed by the darkness again when Re leaves the cavern.[337]

Further litanies are associated with the fifth division of the Book of Caverns. Some of these are addressed to Osiris by Re. The latter tells the former to bend his arm and exercise control over his shoulder. Re calls Osiris 'the great god whose head is in darkness and whose hind quarters are in darkness', but says that he makes him content with his illumination. He adds that the *ba* of Osiris is in his entourage and that he (Re) issues commands to those who are in Osiris's following.[338] In one litany, the sun god repeatedly enjoins Osiris to arise. In another, he reiterates that he has illuminated the god's corpse. Thereafter, it is said, he departs from the cavern of Osiris.[339]

A scene in the sixth division of the Book of the Caverns depicts a bent-over deity whom a caption identifies as Osiris-Orion facing a falcon who is identified as Horus. Re addresses the former and instructs him to look after his son, embellishing his eye for him and making him content with it. In return, the sun god promises to illuminate him with his disk. Osiris-Orion responds by promising to do what the sun god has said and asking him to grant various favours. Horus then addresses Re, calling him 'he who bore the one who bore me', and beseeching him to draw near and dispel the darkness from them.[340] In another scene in the same division, Re tells Osiris that he will give him the command which is in his mouth and let him breathe by means of that which emerges from him. The *ba* of Osiris will live, so the sun god says, when he illuminates that deity's cavern with his brightness.[341]

The middle register of the concluding scene of the Book of Caverns shows the bark of the sun god being towed by a group of divinities. The accompanying text states that they are towing Re to cause him to rest in the eastern mountain. Above and below, two groups of deities are said to rejoice for Re-Harakhti when he enters the sky (literally: the body of Nut). The sun is shown in the act of leaving the underworld in the forms of a ram-headed scarab, a child, and a disk. Those who tow his vessel say that he will enter the eastern mountain, become visible, and illumine those who are on earth with his brightness. Osiris addresses the sun god as the lord of life, beseeching him to look at him and summon his *ba* into his following. Re acquiesces to his plea. A *ba* bird standing in the prow of Re's vessel is identified as Osiris, and the accompanying text explains that the god's *ba* enters the solar bark, while his corpse and his form remain upon his throne.[342]

We have examined the Book of Caverns in some detail. Nowhere does that work provide any hint of the sort of permanent solar-Osirian fusion imagined by Niwiński. The text does allude to the nocturnal union of Re and Osiris, but this is clearly envisaged as a temporary one, since the sun god is said to pass on to a different part of the underworld at its conclusion. The final scene of the composition is of particular interest. There is no reference to a new 'great god' incorporating both Re and Osiris

[337] Ibid., pp. 266–9. [338] Ibid., pp. 330–7. [339] Ibid., pp. 348–9.
[340] Ibid., pp. 390–5. [341] Ibid., pp. 434–5. [342] Ibid., pp. 461–73.

who leaves the underworld at dawn. As far as those who tow the solar bark are concerned, their passenger is Re or Re-Harakhti, not Re-Osiris. They make no allusion at all to the latter deity. Likewise, for the deities who hail the arrival of another dawn, it is only Re-Harakhti who enters the body of Nut to initiate it.

Osiris is present in the final scene, but as elsewhere in the Book of Caverns, he and Re are treated as two separate deities. Moreover, his position in relation to the sun god is a distinctly subordinate one. He has to beseech Re, the lord of life, to look at him and allow his *ba* a place in the solar bark as one of his retinue. Thus he is entirely dependent upon the sun god's indulgence for the fulfilment of his request.[343] Nor is the grant of permission to travel in the bark of Re an indication that Osiris is being uniquely favoured. As we saw in section 4.14.3, travelling in the day and night barks of the sun god was something that ordinary deceased people aspired to do as early as the eleventh dynasty.

5.8.7. Coffins and illustrated papyri of the twenty-first dynasty

Niwiński goes on to cite further examples of what he regards as evidence for the conception of the solar-Osirian unity. These date from the twenty-first dynasty, which is when he thinks the idea reached its peak. However, his interpretation of the examples in question is rather fanciful, in my view. Niwiński claims, for instance, that when images of two deities occur side by side in the decoration of an object, this signifies that they are identified with each other. He refers to this as 'substancial (*sic*) identity of different figures'. He cites a scene on a coffin in Cairo (JE 29668) in support of his view. This shows two symmetrically positioned falcons facing each other. According to Niwiński, one is called Re-Harakhti and the other Sokar-Osiris. Although the two figures are separate, he nevertheless maintains that they illustrate the principle of the solar-Osirian unity.[344]

This interpretation is problematic for a couple of reasons. One is that Niwiński has misinterpreted the labels that identify the two falcons. The one on the right is actually identified as Sokar, not Sokar-Osiris. What he thinks is the second element of a compound divine name is actually a separate label that identifies a standing mummiform figure below the falcon on the right. Does the scene therefore illustrate the solar-Sokarian principle? A more serious problem is the idea that depicting two deities in a scene together is a way of signalling that they are a unity. The scene with the two falcons shows Geb and Nut as well. Does this mean that the latter pair constitute a unity? Elsewhere in his article, Niwiński cites another scene on the Cairo coffin. This depicts the goddesses Isis and Nephthys kneeling in symmetrical positions on either

[343] This shows that the *ba* is not a manifestation of the sun god, as M. Minas-Nerpel, *Der Gott Chepri: Untersuchungen zu Schriftzeugnissen und ikonographischen Quellen vom Alten Reich bis in griechisch-römische Zeit* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2006), p. 211, thinks.

[344] Niwiński, *JEOL* 30 (1987–8), pp. 100–1.

side of the bier of Osiris.[345] Do they constitute a unity? The answer is obviously no in both cases. A more cogent explanation is that in all the examples under consideration the paired deities are shown interacting with each other or doing something in conjunction.

Much of the evidence Niwiński cites as evidence for the solar-Osirian unity is purely representational, without any identifying labels or captions. Where these are present, they do not always identify every figure in a scene. This offers considerable scope for speculation as to who or what the figures in question represent. In one scene on Cairo coffin JE 29718, for instance, three mummiform figures are shown standing on a serpent. No label or caption identifies the serpent, yet Niwiński is confident that it incarnates both Apopis and Seth. Since the former is the archfoe of Re and the latter that of Osiris, he identifies the subject of the scene as the solar-Osirian triumph over the joint enemy of the two united gods.[346] Given the absence of any evidence to support this interpretation, however, it remains nothing more than a guess.

Niwiński considers some scenes to represent a form of visual cryptography. He thinks these have to be deciphered in the same way that one reads cryptographic texts. His analysis of a scene on another Cairo coffin, JE 29662, offers a good example of how he goes about doing this. The scene in question depicts a mummiform figure with a scarab beetle instead of a head standing below the bark of the sun god. The latter is represented as a seated figure (not a mummy as Niwiński claims) with a falcon head surmounted by a disk. Niwiński 'reads' this scene as a cryptogram of the name of the solar deity: Re-Harakhti-Atum-Khepri. But on a symbolic level, according to him, the scene recounts the myth of the resurrection of Osiris (= the mummy), who became (*ḫpr* = the scarab) the great god, being united with Re (= the solar bark), at the same time alluding to the creation myth of the Heliopolitan cosmogony.[347] Others may find these interpretations more plausible than I do.

Niwińki maintains that each complex figural combination of symbols encountered on twenty-first dynasty coffins and papyri should be interpreted as having double meaning, solar and Osirian. According to him, each divine figure represents a different form of the great god in both of his united aspects.[348] We have scrutinized a representative selection of the examples that he cites in support of his view in this section. None of these provides any convincing evidence that his interpretation is correct. In no case can he prove that a specific scene or figure actually does illustrate the solar-Osirian unity. The most that can be said of these is that they incorporate solar and Osirian motifs, along with various other iconographic elements. In this respect the scenes and figures analysed by Niwiński are by no means unique, since the same combination can be found in many other Egyptian texts and representations as well, not least the New Kingdom guides to the underworld that we have just finished looking at. As we have seen, these make no reference to the solar-Osirian unity, so there is no compelling reason to think that the later images collected and analysed by Niwiński do either.

[345] Ibid., p. 94. [346] Ibid., p. 99. [347] Ibid., pp. 101–2 and 104. [348] Ibid., p. 102.

5.9. RE AS RULER OF THE UNDERWORLD

5.9.1. Textual evidence for Re's pre-eminence over Osiris

One point frequently overlooked by advocates of the concept of the solar-Osirian unity is the disparity in the relationship between Re and Osiris in the underworld guides and related sources. They are far from being equal. Rather, Re is pre-eminent and Osiris subordinate to him.[349] A review of the texts that we have been discussing will confirm that this is so. In the final scene of the Book of the Earth, for instance, the great mysterious god of the underworld worships Re in his cavern. In the introduction to the third hour of the Amduat, Re is said to govern those who are in the following of Osiris. In another text from the same hour, the sun god commands Osiris himself. At the conclusion of that hour, Osiris praises Re and is said to be in his following.

In the first division of the Book of Caverns, Re says repeatedly that he has entered the west to exercise governance over Osiris and issue commands to that god's followers. Elsewhere in the same division he asserts that he governs those in the underworld. Likewise in the second division, Re tells Osiris that he passes over his cavern and gives commands to those who are in his following. The litanies addressed to Re between the third and fourth divisions of the Book of Caverns place great emphasis on the sun god's oversight of affairs in the west. Among other things, he regulates its affairs and issues commands to its inhabitants.

Further references to Re acting in this supervisory capacity occur in the fourth division and in the litanies associated with the fifth division of the Book of Caverns. In one of the latter, Re says that the *ba* of Osiris is in his entourage and that he (Re) issues commands to those who are in that god's following. In the sixth division, the sun god gives instructions to Osiris and, in return, that deity asks various favours of him. In the concluding scene of the Book of Caverns, Osiris addresses Re as the lord of life, beseeching him to allow his *ba* a place in the sun god's bark. It is only thanks to the sun god's magnanimity that the *ba* receives one.

One could cite additional examples, but these should be sufficient to prove the point. Osiris is the ruler of the underworld, but he exercises his power alongside and under the supervision of Re. The situation is well described in the text from the second division of the Book of Caverns cited in section 5.8.6 which says that the *ba* of Osiris is in the following of Re when exercising governance over those in the realm of the dead. As a consequence, Osiris has his own followers, but they are subject to the sun god's command as well as that of their nominal leader.[350]

[349] Quack, *WdO* 35 (2005), p. 39, has already noted this with respect to the compositions erroneously described by Darnell as 'books of the solar-Osirian unity'.

[350] Contrast Onstine, *JSSEA* 25 (1995), p. 71, who says that Re submits himself to Osiris and his followers in the Book of Caverns. In my view, this misunderstanding results from her excessive reliance upon the translation of that work published in Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, pp. 45–135, which is not always accurate. The idea that the followers of Osiris are followers of Re as well is also attested in Book of the Dead Spell 130, where it is said about the sun god: 'Those who are in the following of Osiris follow him.' See

This picture is confirmed by other sources, for example the Abydos stela of Ramesses IV discussed in section 5.7.2, in which the king tells Osiris: 'When Re appears each day, he arrives at the underworld to exercise governance for this land and for the (other) lands as well, while you also sit like him.[351] Even the famous scene depicting the ram-headed mummiform deity in the tomb of Nofretari attests to the sun god's pre-eminence. The words 'It is Re resting in Osiris' to the right of that figure and 'Osiris resting in Re' to its left have often been cited as evidence of the parity assumed to exist between the two deities. What is often overlooked, however, is that a label adjacent to the figure's head clearly identifies it as Re.[352]

5.9.2. The presence of a sun disk in scenes as a symbol of Re exercising oversight in the underworld

The solar circuit encompasses two parts: the sky and the underworld. In the New Kingdom and its aftermath, Re was believed to have charge of both parts, while Osiris only exercised control over the second one, and that under the sun god's supervision. Awareness of this helps us better to understand a number of phenomena which have been or might be misinterpreted as evidence for the identification of Re and Osiris. One is the presence of a sun disk in many scenes in the Book of Caverns and elsewhere. In a scene in the third division, for instance, the disk appears above a prone ithyphallic figure of Osiris.[353] A scene in the fourth division shows Osiris quickening into life with Isis and Nephthys on either side of him and a sun disk above.[354] Another scene in the same division shows Anubis, Osiris, and the *ba* of Osiris with a sun disk above their heads.[355] In a scene in the fifth division a sun disk surmounts a sarcophagus containing the pieces of Osiris's corpse.[356]

As we have seen, there are no grounds for thinking that scenes like these depict a permanent union of Re and Osiris. Representations like the last one cited, or a scene on Cairo coffin JE 29718, which shows a sun disk above the mummy of Osiris,[357] could be viewed as depictions of Re as the *ba* of Osiris hovering or resting above his body. But this is not the case with the scene in the fourth division of the Book of Caverns where the *ba* of Osiris is actually shown separately, along with other figures, below the sun

E.A.W. Budge, *The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day or the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* 2 (London, 1910). p. 165, line 6.

[351] Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions Historical and Biographical* 6, p. 22, lines 15–16.

[352] See Siliotti and Leblanc, *Nefertari e la valle delle regine*, p. 135. Although he does not mention the label, L. Lesko, 'Some Remarks on the Books of the Dead Composed for the High Priests Pinedjem I and II', in D. Silverman (ed.), *For his Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer* (Chicago, 1994), p. 181, has commented on the connection between this representation and Book of the Dead Spell 180 which, as he observes, subsumes Osiris into Re.

[353] Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch* 2, p. 126 (scene 32).

[354] Ibid., p. 184 (scene 41).

[355] Ibid., p. 198 (scene 46).

[356] Ibid., p. 266 (scene 60).

[357] See Niwiński, *JEOL* 30 (1987–8), p. 97 (bottom).

disk. Nor is this explanation viable in scenes where the sun disk is present but Osiris is not, for example, one from the fifth division of that composition that shows the disk above four forms of Horus, Anubis, and a sceptre made by Atum,[358] or another scene in the same division where the disk surmounts three figures identified as the corpse of Atum, Tatenen, and the corpse of Khepri.[359]

The explanation that best accounts for the presence of the disk in all these scenes is that it represents Re exercising oversight of what happens in the underworld, whether this involves Osiris or not, which is precisely what the texts accompanying the scenes in the Book of Caverns say he does. One can compare scenes of other types, e.g. battle and offering scenes, in which a sun disk is shown above the head of a king, where the meaning is the same: the presence of the disk indicates that the solar deity oversees whatever activity the king is performing and protects him while he is engaged in it.[360]

5.9.3. Sun disk on the head as a sign of subordination to Re

In some Egyptian representations of the post-New Kingdom period, Osiris is actually shown with a sun disk on his head.[361] These too have been interpreted as evidence for the conception of the solar-Osirian unity.[362] However, Osiris is not unique in being shown in this manner. A number of goddesses closely associated with the sun god as his daughter or his eye, e.g. Sekhmet and Tefnut, can be depicted with sun disks on their heads as well. The eye of the sun is its disk, its visible manifestation, so it is appropriate that this should be incorporated in their iconography.

But even deities who are not associated with Re in this manner sometimes have solar disks on their heads. A scene from the version of the Book of the Earth in the tomb of Ramesses VI, for instance, depicts two standing mummiform figures identified as the corpses of Tatenen and Nun respectively. The one on the right has a sun disk on his head.[363] Another scene in the Book of the Earth shows three standing mummies, each with a solar disk on his head. In the tomb of Ramesses VI, the larger one in the middle of the group is identified as 'he who destroys the hour', while the two smaller ones on

[358] Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch* 2, p. 248 (scene 54). [359] Ibid., p. 244 (scene 52).

[360] See, for example, The Epigraphic Survey of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, *The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I* (Chicago, 1986), plates 2–5, 19–20, 28, and 32; A. Egberts, *In Quest of Meaning* 2 (Leiden, 1995), plates 25, 30, and 107; Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI*, p. 46 figure 8. On the use of the sun disk in Egyptian iconography, see also B. Gessler-Löhr, 'Die Sonne über dem Falken: Bemerkungen zur Ikonographie des Gottes Behedeti (I)', in M. Flossmann-Schütze, M. Goecke-Bauer, F. Hoffmann, A. Hutterer, K. Schlüter, A. Schütze, and M. Ullmann (eds), *Kleine Götter—Grosse Götter: Festschrift für Dieter Kessler zum 65. Geburtstag* (Vaterstetten, 2013), pp. 189–227.

[361] See, for instance, Niwiński, *JEOL* 30 (1987–8), p. 97 (bottom). On a stela in Cairo (JE 29308), the disk is on the god's crown rather than the top of his head. See A. Zayed, 'Painted Wooden Stelae in the Cairo Museum', *RdE* 20 (1968), plate 8A.

[362] Niwiński, *JEOL* 30 (1987–8), p. 98; Lucarelli, *The Book of the Dead of Gatseshen*, p. 27.

[363] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 197–8.

either side share the same name: 'the one with warlike face'.[364] Since the accompanying text says that Re passes by those with warlike faces and addresses them,[365] there can be no question of their identification with the sun god. Instead, what they and the other mummiform figure cited above all share in common is that they have some relation to or perform some service for the sun god.[366]

Examples of this occur in texts of later periods as well. In a scene depicting the judgement of the dead on the Roman Period coffin of a woman called Teuris, for instance, the four sons of Horus and the monster who devours the wicked all have sun disks on their heads.[367] Once again, the purpose of these is not to identify them with Re, but rather to show that they are within his sphere of influence, that they act under his supervision. The judgement scene on this coffin is of particular interest, since it is presided over by Re rather Osiris. This is indicated by the presence of a sun disk on top of the balance, the same colour as those on the heads of the devourer and the sons of Horus, and a representation of the eyes and ears of the solar deity beneath its two arms.[368] Nor is this the only instance in which the sons of Horus are shown with sun disks on their heads. A number of other deities can be depicted with them in representations of this period as well, in contexts where there is no question of their identification of Re.[369] So too can the deceased, as we see on a cartonnage now in Budapest where the owner, shown with a sun disk and ram's horns, addresses a hymn to the sun god based on Pyramid Text Spell 600.[370] Osiris, even in his capacity as ruler of the dead, is no less subject to Re's influence than any of these, so it is not surprising that he should be depicted with a sun disk on his head like them.

5.9.4. Other visual means of expressing Re's status as ruler of the underworld

Awareness that Re was believed to govern the underworld alongside Osiris is also a key to understanding a range of other phenomena in addition to those already mentioned, for example, the fact that the two gods are given equal weight in some private tombs of the later New Kingdom.[371] It also explains why a falcon-headed Re-Harakhti sometimes replaces Osiris as the recipient of the deceased's offerings or adoration in scenes

[364] Ibid., pp. 201–4; K. Myśliwiec, 'La renaissance solaire du mort', *BIFAO* 81 (1981), Supplément, pp. 96–9 and plates 14–17.

[365] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 370–1.

[366] See the texts accompanying the figures in Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 370–1.

[367] See D. Kurth, *Der Sarg der Teüris* (Mainz am Rhein, 1990), plates A, 1, and 3–4.

[368] Ibid., pp. 7–9. For Re presiding over the judgement of the dead, see also section 4.15.3.

[369] See references listed in Kurth, *Der Sarg der Teüris*, p. 8 note 53.

[370] L. Kákosy, 'Selige und Verdammte in der spätägyptischen Religion', *ZÄS* 97 (1971), pp. 98–9 with Abb. 2.

[371] See J. van Dijk *apud* G. Martin, *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb Commander-in-Chief of Tutankhamun* 1 (London, 1989), p. 63.

on Third Intermediate Period stelae and other objects. The sun god can even be shown as a mummy, as he often is in the underworld guides, holding Osiris's insignia of kingship in his hands.[372] This conception may also explain why some anthropoid coffins and cartonnages of the twenty-second dynasty have a falcon rather than a human head.[373]

5.10. THE COMPLEMENTARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RE AND OSIRIS

5.10.1. Dual cultic affiliation and disjunction between text and image

As rulers of the two regions traversed by the sun during its daily circuit, sky and underworld, Re and Osiris stand in a complementary relationship. This is reflected in various ways in texts and representations of the New Kingdom and its aftermath. In the lunette of one stela of the Third Intermediate Period now in Cairo, for instance, two scenes depict the deceased in adoration before Re-Harakhti and Atum. Below these, inscribed in eight horizontal lines, is a hymn to Osiris.[374] This does not mean that Osiris is being equated with either form of the solar deity. Rather, as in the case of stela BM EA 8486, discussed in section 4.14.4, the fact that the deceased has cultic affiliations with more than one deity is communicated by alluding to one in the lunette and the other in the text inscribed below it. One could also describe this as a further instance of disjunction between text and image.[375] Two different messages are conveyed by the stela: one (deceased is a devotee of Osiris) verbally, the other (deceased is a devotee of the sun god) visually, thus utilizing the available space on a relatively small (48 x 35 cm) object in the most efficient way possible.

Disjunction between text and image is also evident in Kushite Period stelae from Abydos where Re-Harakhti is depicted in the lunette but the text below is an offering

[372] See M. Loth, 'Thebanische Totenstelen der Dritten Zwischenzeit: Ikonographie und Datierung', in G. Broekman, R. Demarée, and O. Kaper (eds), *The Libyan Period in Egypt: Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21st–24th Dynasties: Proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25–27 October 2007* (Leuven, 2009), pp. 224–30, with additional comments ibid., p. 442. For a representative selection of examples, see H. Saleh, *Investigating Ethnic and Gender Identities as Exposed on Wooden Funerary Stelae from the Libyan Period (c.1069–715 B.C.E.) in Egypt* (Oxford, 2007).

[373] G. Broekman, 'Falcon-Headed Coffins and Cartonnages', *JEA* 95 (2009), pp. 80–1. Some, e.g. J. Taylor, 'Changes in the Afterlife', in W. Wendrich (ed.), *Egyptian Archaeology* (Chichester and Malden, 2010), p. 226, associate the falcon head with Sokar-Osiris. According to him the association of the deceased with that deity was an innovation of the Third Intermediate Period, but as we saw in section 4.14.1 this link existed much earlier.

[374] Zayed, *RdE* 20 (1968), pp. 156–8 and plate 10.

[375] See Bryan in Der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* 1, pp. 161–8.

formula invoking Osiris as donor.[376] In a stela of the Saite Period in Cambridge, three people are shown standing before a mummiform figure wearing the white crown. The text above the scene requests that Re-Harakhti give them offerings.[377] Leahy interprets this to mean that the figure with the white crown actually represents that god.[378] While it is true that in stelae of this type the deity who is asked to provide offerings is normally the one actually depicted, this could be a case analogous to those cited in the preceding paragraph, in which the scene associates the deceased with one deity (here Osiris) and the accompanying text with another (the sun god), for the purpose of indicating dual cultic affiliation. If the mummiform figure really is the solar deity, this could be a further instance in which he is shown with the royal insignia of Osiris to mark his status as ruler of the underworld.[379]

Dual cultic affiliation, to both the sun god and Osiris, is also reflected in New Kingdom tombs at Thebes where hymns to Re and Osiris are found on the left and right sides of the entrance respectively,[380] and at Saqqara, where the deceased is shown worshipping the two deities either separately on pairs of stelae, or in separate scenes on the same stela.[381] It is further reflected in Ramesside pyramidia from the same site,[382] and in post-New Kingdom illustrated papyri where the deceased is shown worshipping the two deities in adjacent scenes.[383] In some papyri, the dead person is depicted standing in adoration before both gods together.[384] Each is clearly labelled with his name, thus distinguishing them from each other. As one might expect, the solar deity precedes and Osiris stands behind him.

The complementary relationship of Re and Osiris is further reflected in stelae of the Third Intermediate Period where the deceased is shown adoring or presenting offerings

[376] A. Leahy, 'Kushite Monuments at Abydos', in C. Eyre, A. Leahy, and M. Leahy (eds), *The Unbroken Reed: Studies in the Culture and Heritage of Ancient Egypt in Honour of A.F. Shore* (London, 1994), p. 174. For twenty-second dynasty examples where an image of the sun god is juxtaposed with an offering formula invoking Osiris, see Saleh, *Investigating Ethnic and Gender Identities as Exposed on Wooden Funerary Stelae from the Libyan Period (c.1069–715 B.C.E.) in Egypt*, pp. 190 and 222.

[377] A. Leahy, 'Two Late Period Stelae in the Fitzwilliam Museum', *SAK* 8 (1980), pp. 176–7 and plate 4.

[378] Ibid., p. 176.

[379] Leahy (ibid., p. 176 note 29) cites a stela in Avignon where he says a mummiform figure wearing the *atef*-crown is labelled Re-Harakhti. However, the position of the label suggests that it refers to the winged sun disk above that figure rather than to the figure itself, as already proposed in A. Moret, 'Monuments égyptiens du Musée Calvet à Avignon', *Recueil de Travaux* 35 (1913), p. 52. Compare the photograph of the object in question in M.-P. Foissy-Aufrère, *Égypte & Provence* (Avignon, 1985), p. 40, fig. 23. For Re-Harakhti as the winged disk, cf. Saleh, *Investigating Ethnic and Gender Identities as Exposed on Wooden Funerary Stelae from the Libyan Period (c.1069–715 B.C.E.) in Egypt*, p. 261.

[380] J. Assmann, *Sonnenhymnen in thebanischen Gräbern* (Mainz am Rhein, 1983), p. xv; Quack in Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung*, p. 172; Gessler-Löhr in Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'*, p. 167.

[381] Gessler-Löhr in Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'*, p. 167; M. Raven, *The Tomb of Pay and Raia at Saqqara* (London, 2005), plates 18 and 58–9.

[382] Gessler-Löhr in Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'*, p. 167.

[383] See e.g. A. Niwiński, *Studies on the Illustrated Theban Funerary Papyri of the 11th and 10th Centuries B.C.* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1989), plate 4a.

[384] Ibid., plate 49a.

to Osiris and the bark of the sun god is depicted overhead.[385] It also finds expression in the decoration of some burial ensembles of this time. Inner coffins are inscribed with an offering formula naming Osiris as the donor, while those on outer coffins invoke the sun god in this role. In offering formulas on contemporary cartonnages, moreover, the name of Re-Harakhti is sometimes inserted before that of Osiris in the list of donors. Conversely, the name of Osiris is never inserted before that of the sun god.[386] This probably reflects the difference in status between the two gods. As we have seen, Re exercises control over both sky and underworld, whereas Osiris only has authority over the latter, and that under the sun god's supervision.

5.10.2. Textual variation involving the names of Re and Osiris

The fact that textual variants quoted in certain Book of the Dead spells substitute the name of Re for that of Osiris has been cited as evidence for the view that the two deities were regarded as one. Thus Hornung says: 'In the Book of the Dead the two gods are felt to be a unity to such an extent that in many passages their names appear to be interchangeable.'[387] The names of Re and Osiris vary with each other in different versions of some Coffin Text spells as well,[388] but this need not signify that they were identified, since the name of Osiris also varies with those of Isis, Horus, and Nut.[389] In such cases there is no possibility of identification.

The name of one thing can also be substituted for that of another if there is a complementary relationship between the two. Thus, the toponyms *ꜣbḏw*, 'Abydos', and *Ḏdw*, 'Busiris', are attested as variants in the Coffin Texts.[390] This does not mean that the cities in question were equated. Rather, the name of one could be substituted for that of the other because they were the chief cult centres of Osiris in Upper and Lower Egypt respectively. Likewise, Isis, Horus, and Nut have complementary relationships with Osiris as his wife/sister, son, and mother. This provides us with a more cogent explanation for the variation between the names of Re and Osiris in some Book of the Dead passages, since it is more in keeping with the rest of the evidence that we have looked at.

[385] See e.g. Saleh, *Investigating Ethnic and Gender Identities as Exposed on Wooden Funerary Stelae from the Libyan Period (c.1069–715 B.C.E.) in Egypt*, pp. 189, 191, and 194–5.

[386] See J. Elias, *Coffin Inscription in Egypt after the New Kingdom: A Study of Text Production and Use in Elite Mortuary Preparation* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1993), pp. 339–48.

[387] Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*, p. 95. He cites two examples, both from Spell 17: H. Grapow, *Religiöse Urkunden: Ausgewählte Texte des Totenbuches* (Leipzig, 1915–17), pp. 15, lines 12–15, and 88, lines 15–16. See also ibid., p. 92, lines 9–10, another gloss from the same spell. Lucarelli, *The Book of the Dead of Gatseshen*, pp. 52 and 106, draws attention to the substitution of Re's name for that of Osiris in the title of one version of Spell 119.

[388] B. Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten* (Wiesbaden, 1975), p. 47.

[389] Ibid., pp. 46–7.

[390] See de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 3 (Chicago, 1947), p. 177a.

5.10.3. 'Solar' and 'Osirian' spells in the Book of the Dead

Finally, some Book of the Dead papyri of post-New Kingdom date contain a higher proportion of 'solar' spells while 'Osirian' ones predominate in others. A few have taken this as an indication of differing religious beliefs or conceptions of the afterlife on the part of their owners.[391] In a sense, the distinction is an artificial one, since many spells cannot be categorized so rigidly. Here too, however, the complementary relationship between Re and Osiris should be taken into consideration. Since the two gods rule the hereafter in conjunction, they are evidently part of the same belief system. Thus there is no need to posit the existence of different or competing religious philosophies that oppose one deity to the other.[392]

5.11. SOLAR-OSIRIAN UNITY? SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Two different models have been postulated by Egyptologists to explain the relationship between Re and Osiris in the New Kingdom and its aftermath. In one model, they are separate deities who meet and unite temporarily each night during the sun god's journey through the underworld, to the mutual benefit of both. In the other, the so-called solar-Osirian unity, they are permanently merged into a single super-deity, the 'great god' Re-Osiris. The first model is compatible with all the evidence that we have examined. The second is compatible with only a part of that evidence. In fact, much of the evidence is impossible to reconcile with this model.

In the investigation of any phenomenon, a model which accounts for all of the evidence is preferable to one which does not. Because it has greater explanatory force, therefore, the first model is to be preferred to the second. Quack has noted that claims about the centrality of the conception of the solar-Osirian unity in the corpus of guides to the underworld need to be assessed more critically than they have been in Egyptological literature to date.[393] The results of the detailed investigation conducted in this chapter show that his remark is justified. They indicate that the idea of the solar-Osirian unity, at least in the extreme form envisaged by Darnell, Niwiński, and others, is a modern construct for which there is no evidence in any ancient source. As such, it qualifies as myth in more senses than one.

[391] e.g. Lesko in Silverman (ed.), *For his Ka*, pp. 179–86.

[392] Cf. Myśliwiec, *BIFAO* 81 (1981), Supplément, p. 94, who refers to 'les deux dieux ennemis, Rê et Osiris', already criticized in Darnell, *The Enigmatic Netherworld Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity*, p. 159. Likewise, Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 196, contrasts Osirian and solar afterlives as if these were two separate things.

[393] Quack in Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung*, pp. 180–1.

5.12. OTHER FORMS OF ASSOCIATION INVOLVING RE AND OSIRIS

In actual fact, Osiris is linked with the sun god in more ways than the one that has been the focus of our attention thus far. One danger of focusing too narrowly on that particular relationship is that it may lead us to overlook these other forms of association. The idea that Re comes and unites with Osiris temporarily in the underworld each night is especially prominent in works like the Amduat, Book of Caverns, and other texts and representations that are based directly upon them. This is unsurprising, since the underworld guides are concerned above all with what Re does. He is their protagonist; his actions constitute their chief focus of interest. But in other sources, we find different forms of association between the two gods.

5.12.1. Osiris as the nocturnal counterpart of Re

In some sources, Osiris is conceived of as the nocturnal counterpart of Re. He can be the moon who replaces him in the sky at night, or the sun who illumines the underworld during the hours of darkness, just as Re shines over the land of the living during the day. Osiris can even replace Re altogether, being visible in the sky at all times, as the sun during the day and as the moon at night. These other forms of solar association can be difficult to disentangle from one another. One reason for this is that references to them are often intermingled in our sources. Not every text that identifies Osiris as the nocturnal sun, for instance, focuses exclusively on that particular aspect of the god. Many associate him with the daytime sun or other celestial bodies as well.[394] The problem is compounded by the fact that, as Quack has observed, some of the epithets addressed to Osiris in such texts, or some of the acts predicated of him, can apply to more than one celestial body.[395]

A good example is a text from the Memphite tomb of Horemheb which van Dijk has described as a 'hymn to Osiris as nocturnal manifestation of the sun god'.[396] Only one epithet in the entire text bears even a remote relation to this specific aspect of the god, however. The epithet in question is *šfy.ty tp*, which van Dijk translates 'ram-headed one'. According to him, this refers to the ram's head Osiris has as the nocturnal

[394] See, for example, the sources cited in Assmann, *Sonnenhymnen in thebanischen Gräbern*, p. xxxvii, note 42; J. Zandee, *An Ancient Egyptian Crossword Puzzle* (Leiden, 1966), especially pp. 23–4 and 27–9; and Gessler-Löhr in Evans (ed.), *Ancient Memphis 'Enduring is the Perfection'*, pp. 166–71. For discussion of this phenomenon, see M. Smith, 'The Reign of Seth: Egyptian Perspectives from the First Millennium BCE', in L. Bareš, F. Coppens, and K. Smoláriková (eds), *Egypt in Transition: Social and Religious Development of Egypt in the First Millennium BCE* (Prague, 2010), pp. 420–2.

[395] Quack in Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung*, p. 181. Cf. the same author's comments in 'Kritische Bemerkungen zur Bearbeitung von ägyptischen Hymnen nach dem Neuen Reich', *WdO* 37 (2007), pp. 107–8.

[396] See van Dijk *apud* Martin, *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb Commander-in-Chief of Tutankhamun* 1, pp. 63–9 and plates 66–7.

incarnation of the sun god,[397] but it could just as easily mean 'the one whose head inspires awe', alluding to the god's *atef*-crown which is mentioned immediately before.[398] Other passages in the same text refer unambiguously to Osiris as Orion and the moon. Van Dijk interprets these celestial bodies as 'the visible signs of the united Re-Osiris',[399] and claims that when Osiris is called Orion it refers to his incarnation as the night sun god.[400] His reasons for thinking this are difficult to discern. A considerable part of the text in Horemheb's Memphite tomb actually focuses more on Osiris's associations with various cult centres on earth, e.g. Herakleopolis and Abydos, than it does on his links with celestial bodies. For this reason as well, its status as a hymn to Osiris as the nocturnal sun is questionable.[401] If the text alludes to that aspect at all, then this is only one of many aspects of the god that it extols.

5.12.2. The cultic contexts in which Osiris figures as the nocturnal counterpart of Re

Most of the evidence for Osiris as the sun, nocturnal sun, or moon comes from hymns and other texts recited during the performance of that god's cult. Accordingly, he is their main focus, just as Re is the main focus of the underworld guides. It is his qualities that they praise, his deeds that they aggrandize. But it is important that we bear in mind the nature of the texts in which such laudatory utterances occur.[402] Sources of this kind provide useful information on some matters. However, they are not theological treatises and we should not interpret them as such.[403] Like all ritual texts, they are functional, designed to make something happen, to achieve a particular result. What is said to or about Osiris in such texts is ritually contingent. It is valid within the framework of a particular rite inasmuch as it helps to achieve its intended effect, but it does not describe an objective or wider reality.[404]

This is true of cultic texts addressed to other Egyptian deities as well, but it applies with particular force to Osiris. He was a god who died and was restored to life, and his revivification had to be reified and perpetuated by ritual means. One way in which the Egyptians sought to do this was by identifying him with the sun and moon. Not only did this impart a cosmic dimension to the god's resurrection, it invested it with the eternal periodicity of the solar and lunar cycles as well.[405] Thus a ritual utterance

[397] Ibid., pp. 63–4.

[398] For the awe or fear-inspiring properties of the *atef*-crown, see e.g. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 4, pp. 87n–88a; E.A.W. Budge, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, &c., in the British Museum* 3 (London, 1912), plate 28, lines 10–12.

[399] Van Dijk, *OMRO* 66 (1986), pp. 8 and 14–15.

[400] Ibid., p. 13.

[401] As noted already by Quack in Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung*, p. 180 note 56.

[402] Cf. J. Jørgensen, 'Myth and Cosmography: On the Union of Re and Osiris in Two Types of Religious Discourse', in M. Horn, J. Kramer, D. Soliman, N. Staring, C. van den Hoven, and L. Weiss (eds), *Current Research in Egyptology 2010* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 71–80, especially pp. 71–2.

[403] Cf. Quack, *WdO* 37 (2007), pp. 98–9.

[404] For the idea of ritual contingency, see sections 3.8.1 and 3.8.2.

[405] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 68, 136, and 246.

identifying Osiris as the moon was not a statement of objective fact but rather a means of ensuring his regeneration as a cyclically recurring event.

As proof of this, one can point to the fact that there were other lunar deities in ancient Egypt besides Osiris, notably Khonsu and Thoth.[406] Like him, they could be identified with the moon in cultic texts addressed to them. In such contexts, the status of Osiris as moon god was irrelevant, just as their lunar affiliations were in the context of cultic utterances addressed to him. Further evidence that such identifications were ritually contingent is provided by the fact that a text addressed to Osiris as the nocturnal sun, preserved in a papyrus now in Berlin, is paralleled in temple inscriptions where the beneficiary is said to be Horus.[407] The pendant to this text, addressed to Horus as the daytime sun in the temple inscriptions, is also attested in a papyrus as part of a hymn to Sobek-Re.[408] Thus, the same text could be recited to more than one deity, depending on the cultic context in which it was employed.

In this respect, there is a significant difference between these other forms of solar association and the conception of the temporary union between Re and Osiris that we find in the underworld guides and other sources, expressed with the formula 'Re resting in Osiris and Osiris resting in Re'. The latter is not ritually contingent in the way that they are. There are two other important differences to be noted as well. First, in texts that identify Osiris as the nocturnal sun or the moon, he is linked with Re in the sense that he is his counterpart or successor, but little or no direct interaction is envisaged between the two deities. One performs his functions during the day, the other at night. In the underworld guides, by contrast, Re and Osiris interact in a range of different ways, to the mutual benefit of both. Second, the conceptions of Osiris as the moon or nocturnal sun are essentially static. Our sources identify him as one or the other, but they do not tell us how or why he became one or the other.[409] By contrast, the union between Re and Osiris is a dynamic process. It has a starting point, since it arises from a pre-existing duality.[410] Since it is temporary, it also comes to an end, at which point the original duality is restored.

5.12.3. The solar-Osirian cycle

Despite the differences enumerated in section 5.12.2, the various ways in which Osiris is associated with the sun god all have one important feature in common. They link

[406] W. Helck, 'Mond', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 4 (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp. 192–6.

[407] Quack in Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung*, pp. 172 and 180.

[408] Ibid., pp. 178–9.

[409] Van Dijk thinks that Osiris becomes the nocturnal sun and illumines the underworld only after (and as a direct result of) his encounter with Re. See *OMRO* 66 (1986), p. 7; also the same author's remarks *apud* Martin, *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb Commander-in-Chief of Tutankhamun* 1, p. 62. As far as I am aware, however, there is no source which says that Re and Osiris illumine the underworld together. Furthermore, van Dijk's view is contradicted by those sources which say explicitly that Re moves on to visit other parts of the underworld after his encounter with Osiris, leaving that deity behind in darkness.

[410] Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott*, pp. 102–3.

him with Re as part of an eternally recurring cycle. For this reason, I prefer 'solar-Osirian cycle' to 'solar-Osirian unity' as a term to characterize the relationship between the two gods in all its diverse aspects. In some sources, Re and Osiris function independently of each other in separate phases of the cycle, whether these are defined spatially (sky and underworld) or temporally (day and night). In others, they appear together in the same phase of the cycle. As we have seen, the details can vary depending on the nature of the source and the context in which it was employed. What is not subject to variation, however, is the cycle itself. Its continuation was deemed to be essential by the Egyptians, since this in turn ensured the continued existence of the entire cosmos.[411]

5.13. SYNCRETISM BETWEEN RE AND OSIRIS?

Before leaving this topic, we should consider one final way in which Osiris could have been associated with the sun god during the period under consideration. This was through genuine syncretism, as reflected in compound names like Re-Osiris. An early example of this may occur in Coffin Text Spell 1046. The spell in question makes reference to the followers of Osiris (*šms.w n Wsi̯r*). However, one version (B4L) inserts the sun hieroglyph before the name of the god.[412] Some think this may be a scribal error, since all the other versions omit it,[413] but it could also represent the name of Re. However, even if one assumes that this is the case, there is still a certain degree of uncertainty about the translation. Middle Egyptian does not normally employ a word corresponding to English 'and' to coordinate two nouns. Instead, coordination is expressed by direct juxtaposition. Thus, if the name of Re is followed directly by that of Osiris in our passage, two different renderings are possible: 'Re-Osiris' and 'Re and Osiris'. Which is correct is impossible to say. If it is the latter, then we have no evidence for syncretism here.

A possible reference to the syncretistic form Re-Osiris from the period now under consideration occurs in a passage in Book of the Dead Spell 130, where the words *i̯nk Rʿ Wsi̯r* uttered by the recitant could be translated 'I am Re-Osiris'.[414] Not everyone renders them in this manner, however. Some prefer translations like 'I am Ra and

[411] See S. Wiebach-Koepke, *Sonnenlauf und kosmische Regeneration: Zur Systematik der Lebensprozesse in den Unterweltsbüchern* (Wiesbaden, 2007); Wieback-Koepke, *Phänomenologie der Bewegungsabläufe im Jenseitskonzept der Unterweltbücher Amduat und Pfortenbuch und der liturgischen 'Sonnenlitanei'* 1, pp. 307–10.

[412] A. De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7 (Chicago, 1961), p. 298a. For discussion, see section 4.14.3.

[413] Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten*, p. 43.

[414] Budge, *The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day or the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* 2, p. 167, line 4.

Osiris',[415] 'Je suis Rê, et Osiris',[416] or 'I am Re and Osiris.'[417] If they are correct, then this passage provides no evidence for syncretism either.

Further references to this syncretistic form may occur in Book of the Dead Spell 181 where the name of Re is followed immediately by that of Osiris.[418] The name of the latter god is written somewhat unusually in the version of this spell preserved in the papyrus of Gatseshen, the daughter of the twenty-first dynasty high priest of Amun Menkheperre (P. Cairo JE 95838), with the throne sign (Gardiner Sign-List Q1), the 'adorned eye' sign (D6) and the divine determinative (G7).[419] The presence of the adorned eye sign led Quirke to read this divine name as *rs* and interpret it as a form of the verb meaning 'awake'.[420] However, parallels in other manuscripts make it clear that *Wsir* has to be read.[421] Nevertheless, the problem remains of how to interpret the sequence *Rʿ Wsir*. Although one could render this as 'Re-Osiris', most translators show a preference for 'Re and Osiris', treating the two divine names as a coordinated pair.[422]

Two other possible references to the syncretism of Re and Osiris occur in a mythological papyrus of the twenty-first dynasty, discussed in section 5.7.2, where the words *bꜣ dmḏ*, 'composite *ba*', are followed by the names of those two deities. The deceased wishes to assume all the forms that she desires in the underworld, being like the *bꜣ dmḏ Rʿ Wsir*. The difficulty here, as with the previous examples discussed, is deciding whether we should translate 'composite *ba* of Re-Osiris' or 'composite *ba* of Re and Osiris'. If the former is correct, then we have a clear case of syncretism. If the latter is right, then we do not. As noted in the discussion of that text, a similar passage in another manuscript refers to the composite *ba* of Osiris alone.

Finally, a reference to Re-Osiris may occur in a text in the Theban tomb of Pediamunopet (TT 33). Although the precise date of this is uncertain, the owner is likely to have lived during the twenty-fifth or the twenty-sixth dynasty.[423] The text in question is poorly preserved, but one passage contains a reference to the *udjat*-eye followed by the *nisbe* adjective *ỉmy* and the names of Re and Osiris.[424] This could mean either 'the *udjat*-eye which is in Re-Osiris' or 'the *udjat*-eye in which Re-Osiris is'. Nor can we rule out the possibility that Re and Osiris should be understood as two separate

[415] Quirke, *Going Out in Daylight—prt m hrw*, p. 289.
[416] P. Barguet, *Le livre des morts des anciens Égyptiens* (Paris, 1967), p. 172.
[417] T.G. Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day* (Chicago, 1974), p. 106.
[418] See the synoptic treatment of this spell in Luft, *Osiris-Hymnen* 2 (forthcoming).
[419] See E. Naville, *Le papyrus hiératique de Katseshni au Musée du Caire* (Paris, 1914), plate 11, lines 1 and 6–7.
[420] Quirke, *Going Out in Daylight—prt m hrw*, pp. 464–5.
[421] See reference cited in note 418.
[422] See e.g. C. de Wit, 'A New Version of Spell 181 of the Book of the Dead', *BiOr* 10 (1953), pp. 92–3; Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day*, p. 195. Luft, *Osiris-Hymnen* 2 (forthcoming).
[423] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, pp. 47–8 note 224.
[424] Ibid., p. 427.

divine names. Unfortunately, the context is too badly damaged for us to ascertain which of these alternatives is correct.

Re and Osiris may also be involved in more complex syncretisms involving other deities in addition to themselves. In an inscription in the Ramesside tomb of Anhurmose at El-Mashayikh, for instance, there is an apparent reference to Re-Sokar-Osiris.[425] Similarly, a mythological papyrus of the twenty-first dynasty belonging to a man called Pediamun may mention Re-Atum-Osiris.[426] Needless to say, these could be understood as sequences of two or more separate divine names as well, depending on which interpretation one prefers. In the inscription on a cube statue of twenty-fifth dynasty date in the British Museum (EA 24429) the sequence 'Re-Harakhti the great god and lord of the sky, Atum lord of the two lands, the Heliopolitan, Osiris foremost in the west, the great god', is followed by a verb with a third person singular suffix pronoun subject. This has led some to conclude that a syncretism is involved.[427] But there are other cases where similar sequences of divine names, each referring to a distinct deity, are followed by a singular suffix pronoun, so the argument is not persuasive.[428]

It will be clear from this survey that the evidence for a syncretism of Re and Osiris is somewhat equivocal. But even if one accepts some or all of the examples cited in this section as genuine cases of the phenomenon, Osiris would by no means be unique in having such a relationship with the sun god. There are numerous other deities with whom Re is syncretized. In some instances, his name precedes that of the other god involved, e.g. Re-Horus, Re-Harakhti, and Re-Herishef.[429] But his name can follow that of the other god as well. Examples of the latter include Amun-Re, Min-Re, Khnum-Re, and Sobek-Re. The important thing to remember is that there are no references to Re-Osiris or Osiris-Re in the underworld guides which we have investigated in this chapter. This is because, as Assmann has noted, the nocturnal union of Re and Osiris in the underworld is not a syncretism.[430] Their merger is a dynamic process, not a static one. Re rests in Osiris and Osiris rests in Re as the result of an act, an event which recurs cyclically at a fixed moment each night. This is in stark contrast to the atemporal, unchanging state denoted by the term syncretism.

[425] B. Ockinga and Y. Al-Masri, *Two Ramesside Tombs at El-Mashayikh* 1 (Sydney, 1988), plates 46–7.

[426] Piankoff and Rambova, *Mythological Papyri*, p. 111 (no. 10, scene 3); L. Coulon, 'Un trinité d'Osiris thébains d'après un relief découvert à Karnak', in C. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 1 (Montpellier, 2009), p. 14.

[427] J. Leclant, *Enquêtes sur les sacerdoces et les sanctuaires égyptiens à l'époque dite 'éthiopienne' (XXVe dynastie)* (Cairo, 1954), pp. 16–20, especially p. 19 note (e); Coulon in Thiers (ed.), *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 1, p. 14.

[428] See D. Franke, 'The Middle Kingdom Offering Formulas—A Challenge', *JEA* 89 (2003), p. 53.

[429] C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 4 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), pp. 629–35.

[430] See section 5.7.2.

5.14. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RE AND OSIRIS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE DECEASED

This brings us to the last three questions we have to consider. First, if Re rests in Osiris and Osiris rests in Re, what effect does this have upon the relationship between Osiris and the deceased? How do they benefit from the link that he has with the sun god? I would say that they benefit in four different ways. First of all, the cycle in which Re and Osiris are linked together ensures that the cosmos continues to function, which is in turn a precondition for the continuity of the afterlife. Without this cycle, there would be no prospect of posthumous existence.[431] Second, the *ba*/body relationship of Re and Osiris provides a model for that between the *ba* and body of every deceased person. The *ba* alights upon the body each night just as Re meets with Osiris. The parallel is made explicit in some texts. In the first division of the Book of Caverns, for instance, Re says that he causes *bas* to rest upon their bodies when he has rested upon his own body.[432]

Third, the deceased can participate in the cycle that links Re and Osiris, e.g. by travelling in the day and night barks of the sun god, something that they are already said to do in sources of the eleventh dynasty.[433] Thus they are fully integrated within that cycle. Fourth and finally, knowledge of what happens in the underworld is valuable in its own right. The deceased benefit not only from the fact that Re rests in Osiris and Osiris in Re, but from knowing about it as well. The colophon of Spell 181 of the Book of the Dead states that knowledge of the information concerning the relationship between Re and Osiris that it provides will protect the deceased from every evil, permit them to enter and leave the west without being turned away at the gates, and ensure that they receive sustenance in the presence of those who are in the underworld.[434] According to its title, moreover, the spell will enable the deceased to enter the tribunal of Osiris, assume the form of a living *ba*, worship Osiris, and become an elder of the tribunal.[435] But the connection between Osiris and the sun god does not affect the basic relationship between Osiris and the deceased. What happens instead is that this relationship, like every other aspect of life in the underworld, is placed under the supervision of the solar deity.

[431] Cf. Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott*, p. 105. On the cosmic significance of the solar cycle more generally, see references cited in note 411.

[432] Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch* 2, pp. 22–3. Compare Hornung, *Das Amduat* 2, p. 123; Wüthrich, *Éléments de théologie thébaine*, p. 35.

[433] See section 4.14.3.

[434] E.A.W. Budge, *The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day or the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* 3 (London, 1910), p. 99, lines 2–5.

[435] Ibid., p. 97, lines 6–10. Billing in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 5, translates the words *wr ḏḏ.t* in this title as 'the eldest of the tribunal', which he assumes is a reference to Osiris, but I can see no basis for this assumption. Rather we have here a further illustration of the well-attested idea that the blessed dead are allowed to become members of the tribunal of the underworld, for which, see M. Smith, 'Transformation and Justification: A Unique Adaptation of Book of the Dead Spell 125 in P. Louvre E 3452', in R. Ritner (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat: Studies Presented to Janet H. Johnson on the Occasion of her 70th Birthday* (Chicago, forthcoming).

5.15. IDENTIFICATION OR INTERACTION?

5.15.1. Was the deceased king thought to become one with Osiris in the New Kingdom?

It will be noted that the benefits enumerated in section 5.14 do not include identification with either Osiris or Re. This brings us to our next question. Some, e.g. Abitz, think that the deceased king was fully identified with Osiris during the New Kingdom.[436] The evidence for his view is quite dubious, in my opinion. The walls and pillars of royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings contain numerous representations of an enthroned or standing deity with the traditional attributes and iconography of Osiris. According to Abitz, however, this is not Osiris himself but a deified manifestation of the deceased king in his form.

Why this should be so is never made clear. In the vast majority of scenes of this type, the deceased king is shown standing before or presenting offerings to the deity represented.[437] The accompanying inscriptions, without exception, identify the latter explicitly as Osiris. The figure of the king is clearly identified by name as well. In many cases, the king has epithets like 'son of Osiris' and 'justified before Osiris', which clearly distinguish him from the god with whom he is shown.[438] Moreover, some scenes actually have labels elucidating the action depicted in them. These say that the king is presenting offerings 'to his father Osiris', not to himself.[439] This would seem to rule out any possibility that the recipient is the former rather than the latter.

Abitz cites one particular scene from the tomb of Merenptah where the king is shown presenting offerings to Osiris and the god wears pectorals inscribed with that ruler's names.[440] He thinks this identifies the deity as the Pharaoh, even though the divine figure is clearly identified as Osiris.[441] But in my view there is no justification for this interpretation. A scene in the tomb of Pareherwenemef (QV 42), one of the sons of Ramesses III, depicts the god Ptah wearing a pectoral inscribed with the name of the prince's father. Another scene in the tomb of Ramesses-Montuherkhepeshef (KV 19), a son of Ramesses IX, shows him offering incense to the god Thoth. The deity wears a belt inscribed with that king's name.[442] In neither instance is there any reason to think that these scenes portray the king rather than the gods who are actually shown. Thus the fact that they wear items of adornment inscribed with his name is not evidence that they are him.

New Kingdom statues of private people frequently depict them with the name of the reigning king on their clothing or bodies, sometimes even wearing a pectoral inscribed with his cartouche, and this could hardly be interpreted to mean that the ruler is

[436] See F. Abitz, *König und Gott: Die Götterszenen in den ägyptischen Königsgräbern von Thutmosis IV. bis Ramses III.* (Wiesbaden, 1984), pp. 23–7, 57, 114, 133, 175, 182–3, 187, and 205–10.
[437] See e.g. ibid., pp. 7–14. [438] Ibid., pp. 8 and 10. [439] Ibid., pp. 9 and 13.
[440] Ibid., p. 9, Abbildung 3. [441] Ibid., p. 24.
[442] See H. McCarthy, 'Rules of Decorum and Expressions of Gender Fluidity in Tawosret's Tomb', in C. Graves-Brown (ed.), *Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt: 'Don Your Wig for a Joyful Hour'* (Swansea, 2008), p. 106 note 32.

identified with them.[443] Likewise, during the Middle Kingdom, it was not uncommon for women to be buried with pectorals, armlets, and other items of jewellry inscribed with the name of the king.[444] In some cases, these were probably daughters of the ruler, but examples have been discovered in burials of lower-ranking women as well.[445] Here too, there is no question of identification with the king. Rather, the purpose of such objects was to show that the tomb owner was related to him in some way, or was the recipient of some sort of royal favour.[446] Even if one did not have parallels like these, however, it would still be obvious that the god depicted with Merenptah in the scene cited by Abitz is Osiris himself and not that king because the accompanying label states explicitly that the ruler is presenting offerings to his father Osiris.[447]

Leaving aside scenes of this type, I know of no other evidence that might be adduced to support the view that the deceased ruler was thought to become one with Osiris, and many of the sources that we have analysed in this chapter, e.g. the dedicatory inscription of Ramesses II at Abydos, flatly contradict it. In that text, as we have seen, a distinction is maintained at all times between Osiris and the deceased king Seti I. This inscription is of particular value, since it provides a contemporary emic perspective on the question, showing that Ramesses II, at least, did not think his father had become Osiris after his death, even if Abitz does. A further contemporary emic perspective is provided by the Judicial Papyrus of Turin in which the deceased Ramesses III describes his position in the afterlife as being 'among the righteous kings who are before Amun-Re king of the gods and before Osiris the ruler of eternity'.[448] Not only Ramesses III, but other deceased kings as well, are in the presence of Osiris, not identified with him.

One should also note here the presence of Book of the Dead spells in royal tombs. Spell 127, for instance, is supposed to permit the deceased to go down to the tribunal of Osiris and adore the gods who guide the underworld. Spell 125 allows the deceased to emerge successfully from the judgement before Osiris in the hall of the two truths.[449] If a dead king was actually identified with that god, what was the purpose of including such spells in the decoration of his tomb? According to Abitz, kings did not undergo a real judgement in the way that ordinary people did, since royal versions of these Book of the Dead spells replace the first person singular suffix pronouns used in private copies of them with references to the ruler in the third person. This means, he argues, that someone else, in this instance the gods of the underworld, spoke for the king and guaranteed his justification.[450]

[443] See, for example, L. Borchardt, *CGC: Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo* 2 (Berlin, 1925), pp. 94 (no. 548), 97 (no. 551), 100 (no. 553), 112 (no. 563), 116 (no. 566), 117 (no. 567), 132 (no. 581), 133 (no. 582), 139 (no. 584), and 146 (no. 590).

[444] See W. Grajetzki, *Tomb Treasures of the Late Middle Kingdom: The Archaeology of Female Burials* (Philadelphia, 2014), pp. 39–42, 71, 84–5, 88–90, and 133–4.

[445] Ibid., pp. 105, 107, 122, and 134.

[446] Ibid., p. 160.

[447] Abitz, *König und Gott*, p. 9, Abb. 3.

[448] A. de Buck, 'The Judicial Papyrus of Turin', *JEA* 23 (1937), p. 154.

[449] Abitz, *Pharao als Gott in den Unterweltsbüchern des Neuen Reiches*, pp. 183–9.

[450] Ibid., pp. 198–9.

I think there are several flaws in this argument. Contrary to Abitz, there is no reason to think that referring to the beneficiary in the third person rather than the first person rendered a spell more efficacious. Not all versions of Book of the Dead spells in royal tombs make this change. In some, the original first person pronouns are retained. In others, some but not all first person references are changed to the third person.[451] If making this alteration enhanced a spell's effectiveness, then why was it not carried through more consistently? Another point that Abitz overlooks is that the change from first to third person reference is attested in some non-royal copies of Book of the Dead spells as well.[452] Thus use of the third person was not a royal prerogative. In fact, the change from first to third person was simply part of the editing process that some texts underwent when transferred from manuscript to monumental context, as we have already seen in connection with the Pyramid Texts.[453] It did not provide a greater guarantee that a spell's objective would be achieved.

In my view, Abitz's conception of the king's justification in the afterlife is needlessly convoluted. According to him, the king enters the hall of judgement where, identified with Osiris, he sits in judgement upon himself.[454] Advocates acting on his behalf inform him, in his capacity as judge, that he, as the one on trial, is free from sin. On the basis of this information he, as judge, then declares himself guiltless. This is not the most impartial judicial process that one could imagine. If the king is his own judge, why must a third party provide assurances of his virtue? What is the point of the procedure if the one being assessed is also the assessor? A more plausible explanation for the presence of utterances like Book of the Dead Spell 125 in royal tombs is that kings had the same need of them as their subjects did, just as they had need of other utterances like Spell 6 and Spell 30, which spared them from having to do forced labour and prevented their hearts from opposing them in the tribunal of the underworld. The fact that such utterances were inscribed in royal sepulchres, or on shabtis and hearts scarabs deposited in them, is further proof that deceased rulers were not identified with Osiris.[455]

5.15.2. Was the deceased king thought to become one with Re in the New Kingdom?

Dead kings were not believed to become one with the sun god either. This is evident from numerous passages in the underworld guides which make a clear distinction between

[451] Ibid., p. 193.

[452] Compare the different non-royal versions of the negative confession in Spell 125 in Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie* 2, pp. 289–309.

[453] See section 3.7.3.

[454] Abitz, *Pharao als Gott in den Unterweltsbüchern des Neuen Reiches*, pp. 88 and 90; Abitz, *König und Gott*, p. 27.

[455] For copies of Book of the Dead Spells 6 and 30 inscribed on shabtis and heart scarabs from the tombs of twenty-sixth dynasty rulers like Necho, Apries, and Amasis, see K. Jansen-Winkeln, *Inschriften der Spätzeit IV: Die 26. Dynastie* 1 (Wiesbaden, 2014), pp. 269, 356, and 419; K. Jansen-Winkeln, *Inschriften der Spätzeit IV: Die 26. Dynastie* 2 (Wiesbaden, 2014), p. 760.

ruler and deity. In a text from the version of the Book of the Earth preserved in the tomb of Ramesses VI, for instance, Re instructs the inhabitants of one region that he traverses to give praise to the king.[456] Another text from the same tomb says the sun god precedes the king in the underworld.[457] In other texts from that tomb, Re is said to entrust Maat to the king and protect him.[458] In a text from the version of the Book of the Earth in the tomb of Ramesses IX, the sun god describes what he does for the king when he traverses the underworld.[459] In another text from the same tomb, those whose *bas* are in Re's following allow the king to enter and exit from the west without being turned away.[460]

In one passage from the Litany of the Sun, Re is said to protect the king just as he protects those who dwell in the caverns of the underworld.[461] Other passages describe the king as a member of the sun god's retinue,[462] and say that he follows behind that deity's *ba*.[463] In a litany between the third and fourth divisions of the Book of Caverns, the inhabitants of the underworld express their desire that Re might illumine the king, conceal him, give him orders, let him breathe, and do other things for his benefit.[464] In the second division of that text, Re addresses a series of instructions to Osiris, telling him to perform various services for the king. These include protecting him, opening the way for him, destroying his enemies, and causing his *ba* to live.[465] Here the ruler is clearly distinguished, not only from Re, but from Osiris as well. Finally, in the sixth hour of the Amduat the sun god addresses a group of mummiform figures identified as 'kings of Upper Egypt, those at rest, kings of Lower Egypt, and spirits'. They hear the voice of Re every day but remain in their caverns when he moves on after speaking to them.[466] This would hardly be possible if the kings were identified with that god.

5.15.3. Ritually contingent identification of the deceased with Re and Osiris in sources of the New Kingdom

To be sure, there are some ritual utterances preserved in New Kingdom sources where the recitant claims to be Re or Osiris, or asserts the identity of someone else with one of those deities. A good example is Spell 130 of the Book of the Dead, in some versions of which the deceased claims 'I will not be left boatless, I will not be turned away from the horizon, for I am Re and Osiris.'[467] Similarly, in Spell 131, the deceased asserts 'I am this Re who shines in the night.'[468] In one passage of the Litany of the Sun, the

[456] Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, p. 335, lines 22–4.
[457] Ibid., p. 339, lines 10–12. [458] Ibid., pp. 345, lines 9–10, and 358, lines 19–20.
[459] Ibid., p. 401, line 24. [460] Ibid., p. 397, lines 3–5.
[461] Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei) nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches* 1, p. 91.
[462] Ibid., p. 92. [463] Ibid., p. 94. [464] Werning, *Das Höhlenbuch* 2, pp. 164–7.
[465] Ibid., pp. 88–91. [466] Hornung, *Texte zum Amduat* 2, pp. 494–502. Cf. ibid., pp. 472–5.
[467] See Budge, *The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day or the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* 2, p. 167, lines 3–4.
[468] Ibid., p. 171, line 6.

inhabitants of the underworld address the solar deity, saying 'Hail Re, NN (scil. the deceased) is you and vice versa.'[469] In another passage, they tell the sun god, with respect to the deceased, 'His *ba* is your *ba*, his corpse is your corpse.'[470]

Elsewhere, in the same texts, however, the deceased is clearly distinguished from these deities. In Spell 130, for instance, he is said to be a follower of Re, he worships the sun god and that deity listens to his words.[471] Likewise in Spell 131, the deceased says that he is a follower of Re and addresses him as his father.[472] In one passage of the Litany of the Sun, Re is asked to protect the deceased because he is one of those in the sun god's following.[473] In another, he is asked to guide the deceased to the roads of the west.[474] In a third passage, Re is asked to give the deceased's eyes and heart to him, make decrees for him, and save him from various ferocious demons who inhabit the underworld.[475] The deceased is said to pray to the sun god's *ba* and adore him.[476] These are only a few of many examples that could be cited by way of illustration.

We are confronted here with a phenomenon that we have already encountered in the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts: the presence of apparently contradictory statements concerning the deceased's relationship with a deity in different passages of the same ritual text. In some passages, the deceased is identified with the deity, in others the two are distinguished from each other.[477] This phenomenon is attested in later sources as well, for example the First Letter for Breathing of the Graeco-Roman Period. At the beginning of this the deceased asserts 'I am Re in his rising, I am Atum at his setting, I am Osiris the foremost of the westerners during the night.' Later on in the text, however, he asks to be allowed to partake of offerings in the company of Atum and to enter the presence of Osiris on the occasion of one of that god's feasts. He also refers to Re as an entity distinct from himself.[478]

All such apparent contradictions can be explained in the same way. As we have seen, they are inherent in ritual language. A ritual can evoke an unlimited number of parallel realities simultaneously, some of which may conflict with each other. Not every statement uttered in the course of a rite is deemed to be objectively true by its participants, however. Some are only valid in the immediate context of the ceremony in which they

[469] Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei) nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches* 1, p. 101. In the earliest versions, those in the tombs of Useramun and Tuthmosis III, the deceased himself says 'I am you and vice versa.'

[470] Ibid., p. 109.

[471] Budge, *The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day or the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* 2, pp. 165, line 7, and 167, lines 1–2.

[472] Ibid., p. 171, lines 10–11.

[473] Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei) nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches* 1, pp. 91–2.

[474] Ibid., pp. 97–100.

[475] Ibid., pp. 134–47.

[476] Ibid., pp. 136–7.

[477] See sections 3.7.3 and 4.8.3.

[478] See F.-R. Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts* (London, 2008), plate 29 (BM EA 10191, recto, 1/1–2, 8, 11–12, and 14).

are recited. Thus they are ritually contingent. Other statements, by contrast, are deemed to be valid both within and beyond the boundaries of the ritual domain.[479]

5.15.4. Paratextual data for the relationship between the deceased and Re and Osiris: interaction rather than identification

When we are faced with an Egyptian ritual text in which conflicting or contradictory statements about the deceased's relationship with a particular deity are made, a reliable means of distinguishing which of them are ritually contingent and which are not is provided by paratextual data like titles and colophons. Such notices are valuable since they tell us in a straightforward way what a given ritual utterance is actually supposed to do. They comment upon the function of spells without being embedded in their ritual context. Thus their interpretation is not subject to the ambiguities that can hinder our understanding of the utterances to which they are attached.[480]

It follows that if a specific statement about the relationship between the deceased and a deity in a Book of the Dead spell or similar ritual utterance is paralleled in or corroborated by paratextual data, then we are justified in accepting it as evidence of the sort of relationship with that god that the Egyptians actually aspired to have in the afterlife. But if that statement is contradicted by paratexual data, then it cannot be accepted as evidence of such an aspiration. It was deemed to be valid within the context of the ritual in which it was uttered, but had no wider reality outside it.

What about those texts we have noted in section 5.15.3 in which the deceased is sometimes identified with and sometimes distinguished from Re, Osiris, or both? How do the conflicting statements in them compare when measured against the paratextual evidence? The title of Book of the Dead Spell 130 is 'Another spell for making an *akh* excellent on the birthday of Osiris and causing a *ba* to live for ever'.[481] Its colophon states that if offerings are presented on that god's birthday, the deceased's *ba* will live for ever and not die again.[482] Both treat the deceased and Osiris as two distinct entities. The vignette illustrating this spell in some Book of the Dead manuscripts shows Re and two other deities standing in the solar bark with the deceased bringing up the rear.[483] Thus he is not identified with the sun god there either. The title of Spell 131 is 'Spell for being at Re's side'.[484] Here too, the deceased and the sun god are treated as two distinct entities.

The Egyptian title of the work that we have referred to as the Litany of the Sun is 'Beginning of the book of adoring Re in the west and adoring the composite one in

[479] See sections 3.8.1, 3.8.2, 3.9.1, 3.9.4, and 4.8.5. [480] See sections 3.9.1 and 4.9.1.
[481] Budge, *The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day or the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* 2, p. 164, lines 14–15.
[482] Ibid., p. 170, lines 6–8.
[483] See e.g. R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London, 1985), p. 120.
[484] Budge, *The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day or the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* 2, p. 171, line 5.

the west'. The purpose of its recitation, we are told, is to vindicate the sun god against his enemies in the west. The text says it is profitable for a man both before and after his death.[485] The colophon of the Litany specifies that it should be recited in the middle of the night when Re has set in the west by one who has undergone purification.[486] There is no suggestion in either title or colophon that this person is permanently identified with the sun god as a result of doing so. On the contrary, the former makes a clear distinction between Re and the recitant, since one adores the other.

The results of this comparison may be summarized succinctly. Without exception, the paratextual evidence corroborates those statements in our sources that distinguish the deceased from Re or Osiris and contradicts those that identify them with one or the other deity. Thus the latter are ritually contingent, the former are not. They were deemed to be valid, not only in the context of the ritual in which they were uttered, but in the wider world beyond the ritual domain as well. This shows unambiguously that the purpose of the texts in which these statements appear was not to transform their beneficiaries into Re or Osiris. Interaction with these gods, not identification, was their intended goal.

That this is what Egyptians of the New Kingdom aspired to in the afterlife is confirmed by a substantial body of other contemporary paratextual evidence as well. The titles and colophons of the remaining Book of the Dead spells, nearly 200 in total, envisage various ways in which the deceased can interact with Re or Osiris, for example, adoring, being in the following of, entering before, travelling with, and eating and drinking in the presence of one deity or the other. But no title or colophon makes any reference to becoming or being identified with Re or Osiris.[487] Likewise, Barta has made a comprehensive study of the wishes expressed in offering formulas of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period.[488] In the material collected by him, there are numerous instances in which the deceased express the desire to follow, praise, worship, see, accompany, or otherwise interact with Re or Osiris, but not a single one in which they express the wish to be identified with either of those gods.

[485] Hornung, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen (Sonnenlitanei) nach den Versionen des Neuen Reiches* 1, pp. 1–3.

[486] Ibid., pp. 264–5.

[487] The colophon to Spell 147 says 'As for every *akh* for whom this is recited, he will be there as lord of eternity, of one body together with Osiris' (Budge, *The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day or the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* 2, p. 261, lines 4–5). Being 'of one body together with' the god does not signify identification, however, but rather an intimate association. The same idiom is used in New Kingdom royal inscriptions to describe the relationship between a father and his offspring (K. Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* [Leipzig, 1906], pp. 385 and 585). That the colophon does not promise identification with Osiris is also evident from the fact that its initial section says the beneficiary will not be turned or driven away from that deity, which would be meaningless if the two were identified with each other.

[488] Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, pp. 85–193.

5.16. HOW MANY BENEFITED FROM THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RE AND OSIRIS?

5.16.1. Non-royal access to the underworld guides and the concepts that underlie them

Our final question is: did the relationship between Re and Osiris benefit all the deceased equally or only a select group among them? Some think that non-royals were denied access to compositions like the guides to the underworld. Niwiński and Abitz go so far as to suggest the possibility that non-royal use of the Amduat may have been regarded as illegal or even banned by royal decree.[489] They overlook the fact that a copy of the Amduat was inscribed in the tomb of the eighteenth dynasty vizier Useramun (TT 61), along with the earliest extant version of the Litany of the Sun.[490] Another private tomb at Thebes (TT 158), belonging to a twentieth dynasty priest called Tjanefer, was inscribed with several scenes from the Book of Gates.[491]

It must be admitted that these are the only two examples of such compositions in non-royal tombs of the period under consideration. But the ideas and concepts that underlie those compositions figure prominently in several spells in Book of the Dead manuscripts that were produced for private individuals in the New Kingdom.[492] Thus the ideas and concepts in question were of relevance to them as well. As we have seen, the conception at the very heart of the underworld guides is given verbal expression in the formula 'Re resting in Osiris and Osiris resting in Re'. This occurs, with minor variants, in Book of the Dead Spells 15B, 180, and 182.[493] Both the formula and the scene which it normally accompanies appear on the walls of private tombs of New Kingdom date as well. Here again it is important to make a distinction between display and access. During the New Kingdom only a small number of non-royal individuals incorporated guides to the underworld in the decoration of their tombs. A much larger

[489] Niwiński, *Studies on the Illustrated Theban Funerary Papyri of the 11th and 10th Centuries B.C.*, p. 235; Abitz, *Pharao als Gott in den Unterweltsbüchern des Neuen Reiches*, p. 213 note 429.

[490] See section 5.7.1.

[491] K. Seele, *The Tomb of Tjanefer at Thebes* (Chicago, 1959), plates 30–8; Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, p. 4 note 26. According to Snape, *Ancient Egyptian Tombs*, p. 241, and *PM* I², p. 131, there are also scenes from the Book of Gates in the tomb of the twentieth dynasty official Imiseba at Thebes.

[492] See e.g. Spells 15, 15B, 17, 100, 102, 109, 110, 127, 130, 131, 134, 168, 180, 181, and 182. The spell conventionally numbered 168 is not actually a part of the Book of the Dead but rather a separate composition, sometimes known as the 'Spell of the Twelve Caves'. The extant copies include specimens produced for both royal and non-royal beneficiaries. See Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife*, pp. 54–5 and 173; M. Müller-Roth and M. Yacoub, 'Das Grüftebuch des Nes-pa-her-an (Pap. Berlin P. 3006)', in Lepper (ed.), *Forschungen in der Papyrussammlung*, pp. 133–60. References to the motif of the solar circuit in Book of the Dead spells of the New Kingdom have been collected and analysed in S. Wiebach-Koepke, 'Motive des Sonnenlaufes in den Totenbuch-Sprüchen des Neuen Reiches', *SAK* 25 (1998), pp. 353–75.

[493] See Assmann, *Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott*, p. 411, line 5; Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie* 2, pp. 443 and 447; Lucarelli, *The Book of the Dead of Gatseshen*, pp. 69–71.

number, however, incorporated their most salient themes and motifs in texts written on papyrus and other media so that they too could benefit from them.

This does not mean that we should make a distinction between 'royal' texts like the guides to the underworld and 'non-royal' ones like the Book of the Dead. As we have seen, spells from the latter appear in royal tombs as well as in private ones.[494] According to Hornung, the earliest example to be inscribed on the walls of a royal sepulchre is the version of Spell 125 in the tomb of Merenptah.[495] But extracts from Book of the Dead spells already occur on the linen shroud of Tuthmosis III and on the shrines from the tomb of Tutankhamun, so they were used in eighteenth dynasty royal tombs as well as those of subsequent dynasties.[496] What this shows is that the underworld guides and the Book of the Dead present complementary rather than opposing views of the afterlife, which in its essential features was the same for both kings and their subjects.

5.16.2. Was the royal afterlife different to the non-royal one in the New Kingdom?

Hornung has devoted a special study to the question of whether the Egyptians of the New Kingdom envisaged a royal afterlife that differed radically from the one to which non-royalty aspired.[497] He concludes that they did not. In their main features, the royal and non-royal afterlives were practically the same. Hornung does, nevertheless, think that there were a few differences between them, which he identifies as the following.

(1) In the sixth hour of the Amduat the sun god addresses eight mummiform figures identified as the kings of Upper and Lower Egypt. This could be interpreted as evidence that the deceased rulers constituted a distinct, perhaps privileged, group among the other inhabitants of the underworld.[498]
(2) On wine jar sealings from the palace of Amenhotep III at Malqata, a rebus of that king's name is sometimes written inside a disk in the solar bark. According to Hornung, these depict the ruler as Re himself, not simply a passenger in his vessel. Non-royalty, in contrast, could only aspire to travel with the sun god in his bark.[499]
(3) The number of gates through which the deceased king passes in the 'royal' guides to the underworld is not the same as in the 'non-royal' Book of the Dead. Furthermore, while the king negotiates the former without hindrance or difficulty,

[494] See Quack, *WdO* 35 (2005), pp. 43–4; Abitz, *Pharao als Gott in den Unterweltsbüchern des Neuen Reiches*, pp. 174–99.
[495] Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 2, pp. 150–1.
[496] Quack, *WdO* 35 (2005), pp. 43–4.
[497] E. Hornung, 'Zum königlichen Jenseits', in Der Manuelian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* 1, pp. 409–14.
[498] Ibid., p. 409. [499] Ibid., p. 411.

ordinary people have to undergo tests and satisfy conditions of various kinds before they are allowed passage through the latter.[500]

(4) The 'royal' underworld guides devote more attention to the punishment of evildoers than the 'non-royal' Book of the Dead does. According to Hornung, this is the most significant difference between royal and non-royal conceptions of the afterlife. He thinks this is because only the king can confront the reality of the destruction of the wicked directly. Non-royal sources refrain from doing so, thereby presenting a more anodyne view of the afterlife.[501]

(5) The king remains a ruler even after his death. He receives the royal insignia from the gods of the underworld and celebrates *sed*-festivals just like a living monarch.[502]

(6) Since he is identified with Re, the afterlife of the king has a cosmic dimension which is lacking in that of his subjects. This is why in the New Kingdom only royal tombs have stars on their ceilings.[503]

5.16.3. Arguments for a single afterlife shared by both kings and their subjects

In my opinion, these differences are more apparent than real. Each is discussed here in the order just presented.

(1) In the sixth hour of the Amduat, the kings of Upper and Lower Egypt do not actually constitute a distinct group. Rather they are part of a larger assemblage, the other members of which are identified as 'those at rest' and '*akhs*'. Thus, both royal and non-royal dead are part of the same company. In the tomb of the official Haremheb at Thebes (TT 78), the cartouches of four kings, Tuthmosis III, Amenhotep II, Tuthmosis IV, and Amenhotep III, appear in a scene depicting the judgement of the dead. This has been interpreted to mean that they serve as members of the tribunal responsible for assessing the deceased's conduct.[504] But the privilege of service in that tribunal was by no means restricted to royalty. The titles of Book of the Dead Spells 79 and 181 indicate that their beneficiaries will become elders of the tribunal, thus showing that ordinary people were permitted, not only to join the corporation of judges in the underworld, but to attain senior status within it as well.

(2) The writings of the name of Amenhotep III inside a solar disk do not appear in his tomb or any other funerary context. Furthermore, they were only in use for a relatively circumscribed period within that king's reign.[505] Thus it is difficult to

[500] Ibid., pp. 411–12. [501] Ibid., p. 413. [502] Ibid., p. 414. [503] Ibid., p. 414.

[504] A. Brack and A. Brack, *Das Grab des Haremheb: Theben Nr. 78* (Mainz am Rhein, 1980), pp. 54 and 85, plates 56b and 65b. Cf. Hornung, *Das Buch von den Pforten des Jenseits* 2, p. 151.

[505] See W.R. Johnson, 'Images of Amenhotep III at Thebes: Styles and Intentions', in L. Berman (ed.), *The Art of Amenhotep III: Art Historical Analysis* (Cleveland, 1990), p. 38.

interpret them as programmatic statements about the king's relationship with the sun god in the afterlife. Even if they were, they would not be unique. Although ordinary deceased people are not depicted as Re in their tombs, they are nevertheless identified with the sun god in some Book of the Dead spells. As we have seen, all such identifications are ritually contingent, but this is no less true of cases where kings are thus identified. One may also question whether the writing of Amenhotep III's name inside a solar disk is actually meant to signify identification with the sun god as Hornung assumes. Other deities are said to unite with Re's disk in the underworld, but this does not mean they are identified with him.[506] In the closing formula of a hymn in the temple of Edfu, moreover, the sun god is asked to protect the king from all evil because he is 'the great *ba* who is in his sun disk'.[507] This shows that being in the disk need not entail identification with the deity whose visible manifestation it is, since the king and the sun god are clearly envisaged here as two distinct entities.

(3) It is true that the number of gates traversed by the deceased king in the underworld guides differs from the number of gates in the Book of the Dead.[508] But even within the latter corpus of spells, their number varies from one utterance to another. Spell 144, for instance, mentions seven gates, while in Spell 145 there are twenty-one. Thus there is no canonical 'non-royal' number of gates to contrast with the 'royal' one. A further point to note is that the reason the king passes through the gates without hindrance in the underworld guides is that he is accompanying the sun god as a member of his entourage. Re is the ruler of that region, therefore his progress through the portals of the underworld cannot be impeded. In Book of the Dead Spells 144 and 145, by contrast, the deceased are on their own, and hence must rely on other means to secure passage through the gates. It is notable that in the versions of these spells incorporated in Osirian temple rituals, not even that god can pass through the gates unchallenged when unaccompanied by Re. Instead, his son Horus must supply proof that he has the requisite knowledge or state of purity before he is allowed to do so, in the same way as ordinary deceased individuals.[509] In other texts, of course, the deceased are said to travel in Re's following, just as the king is said to do in the underworld guides, and they move through the gates with the same ease that he does.

(4) Although underworld guides describe the punishment of the wicked in more graphic detail than the Book of the Dead does, the subject is by no means ignored in the spells of the latter corpus. As Hornung himself admits, the vignette illustrating Spell 126 depicts a sea of fire and Spell 127 alludes to the damned who are consigned to the house of destruction. Likewise the vignette

[506] See Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth*, p. 387.
[507] É. Chassinat, *Le temple d'Edfou* 3 (Cairo, 1928), p. 11, lines 14–17.
[508] For possible reasons for this, see Lucarelli, *The Book of the Dead of Gatseshen*, p. 159.
[509] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 70–4, and literature cited there.

illustrating Spell 125 shows the fearsome monster who waits to devour those who fail to pass the test of judgement. But the reason why there is less emphasis upon the punishment of sinners in the Book of the Dead is not the one he gives, in my opinion. The underworld guides are concerned with what Re does in the underworld, the Book of the Dead with what the deceased does. Re exercises governance there. One of the tasks he performs in his capacity as ruler of the nether regions is to punish wrongdoers. That is why the theme of punishment figures so prominently in some underworld guides. The ordinary deceased person, on the other hand, is not directly involved in this process. Accordingly, there are fewer references to punishing evil in the Book of the Dead. It is the nature of a text that determines whether or not the fate of the wicked is addressed in it, not the willingness or unwillingness of its author to confront the issue.

(5) In numerous scenes on the walls and pillars of royal tombs the deceased king is shown standing before or presenting offerings to deities. In return, the deities proclaim that they confer various rewards upon him. These include the throne of Osiris, royal insignia like the crook and flail, and an eternity of *sed*-festivals.[510] This certainly gives the impression that the king will continue to act as a ruler in the afterlife. But the gods also say that they bestow the kingship of the two lands upon the ruler, even though it is patently impossible for him to continue governing Egypt after his death. This shows that statements of the type described in section 5.16.2 cannot be taken at face value.

(6) It is not clear why the fact that kings have stars on the ceilings of their tombs must mean the royal afterlife had a cosmic dimension that was lacking in the non-royal one. In any case, one of the two tombs of Senenmut (TT 353) has an astronomical ceiling that incorporates stars in the form of decans.[511] Thus this was not a royal prerogative in the New Kingdom. Hornung also overlooks the fact that these stars are already represented on the lids of private coffins in the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom. Since there is no evidence that coffins of contemporary kings had such decoration, does this mean that the non-royal afterlife at that time had a cosmic dimension that the royal one lacked? From an Egyptian perspective, the cycle in which Re and Osiris were linked together undoubtedly did possess cosmic significance, since it ensured that the cosmos continued to function. But as we have seen, both kings and their subjects alike could participate in that cycle and were thought to derive the same benefits from doing so.

In seeking to determine whether the relationship between Re and Osiris benefited all the deceased equally or only a select group among them, it is essential to take the entire

[510] Abitz, *König und Gott*, pp. 53, 119, and 203–4.

[511] O. Neugebauer and R. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts* 1 (Providence and London, 1960), pp. 22–3 and plates 24–5.

range of available evidence into consideration, not just a single text or group of texts. It is also important to pay careful attention to the nature and genre of the different sources from which our evidence comes, since this can have a profound influence on what they emphasize and what they minimize or ignore altogether. The truth of the matter is probably best summed up by the colophon of Spell 125 of the Book of the Dead. This says that anyone on whose behalf it is employed 'cannot be turned away from any gate of the west. He is ushered in along with the kings of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt, and he will be in the following of Osiris'.[512] The colophon makes no distinction between royal and non-royal deceased. Both are admitted to the underworld on equal terms. The spell itself, not its beneficiary's social status when alive, is what permits them to enjoy the proximity of Osiris. And this utterance, as the colophon assures us, is 'truly effective a million times'.[513]

5.17. CONCLUSIONS

The reign of Amenhotep IV, later Akhenaten, witnessed many new developments, not least in the sphere of religion. That king had a special devotion to the solar cult, in particular, to the visible manifestation of the solar deity, the sun in the sky, which the Egyptians called Aten. There are five significant features of the new religious doctrine which he promulgated about this deity. The first is that it developed gradually over the course of his reign. The second is the special position of the king himself within it. Only Akhenaten has a personal relationship with the sun disk. He alone can know him or understand his ways. Considerable emphasis is placed on the royal aspect of the deity embodied in the disk. Not only is his name written in cartouches, he is also said to celebrate *sed*-festivals or jubilees, just like a king. The third distinctive feature of this doctrine is its focus upon what can be apprehended by the senses, in particular that of sight. The fourth is that, because of this emphasis upon what can be observed empirically, there is no real mythology in Akhenaten's religion. The fifth feature is its exclusive concern with the present, the here and now. The past and the future are of little importance in that king's religious conceptions. Death is rarely mentioned in Amarna texts, and then usually in an oblique or figurative way.

Despite this, belief in the hereafter did not cease during the Amarna Period. Nor did the new doctrine require the abandonment of all traditional ideas and practices relating to the next world. However, many Egyptologists think there was no place for Osiris in Akhenaten's new religion. As a result, they maintain, the elaborate belief system that had grown up around the god of the dead was replaced by a much simpler one. The dead were buried in their tombs, they slept in them at night, and awakened at dawn. Each day their *bas*

[512] Budge, *The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day or the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead* 2, p. 154, lines 5–10. A variant says 'He will be an intimate of Osiris.'
[513] Ibid., p. 154, lines 9–10.

would leave the tombs in order to participate in the cult performed at the temples in Akhetaten. The one who provided the deceased with the means to do this was the king himself, who was the only guarantor of the afterlife.

There is little evidence for proscription of Osiris during the reign of Akhenaten. This has led some to think that he was ignored rather than attacked, unlike Amun and some other deities. But we do actually find references to Osiris, as well as to other deities associated with the Osirian afterlife like Anubis, in sources that some Egyptologists have dated to that time. However, the attribution of many of these to Akhenaten's reign is far from certain. Nevertheless, even when the dubious and disputed items are removed from consideration, a number of examples remain which can be assigned to the reign of that king with certainty, either because they mention him by name or they refer to the Aten using the distinctive nomenclature devised by him and used exclusively during the period of his rule.

Three assumptions are frequently made about references to or depictions of Osiris from the reign of Akhenaten. The first is that they must have been inscribed in the earlier part of it, before he began to focus exclusively upon the sun disk. The second is that they only occur on minor objects and thus reflect a continuation of popular belief in Osiris as opposed to the official belief which had no place for him. The third is that objects from the reign of Akhenaten on which that god is mentioned or depicted must come from sites outside of Amarna, where the ban on other gods was not observed as strictly as it was in the capital itself.

The evidence we have examined shows that while these assumptions are valid in some cases, they are not in others. There are objects with texts that mention Osiris which date from the middle or latter part of Akhenaten's reign. References to the god occur, not just on minor artefacts, but on those of high artistic quality made for officials who were of sufficient rank and position to commission them as well. Moreover, a vessel found in a royal magazine at Akhetaten on which the name of Amun was effaced while that of Osiris was left intact shows us that even in the court circles of the capital the god did not lack for adherents. This suggests that we should examine the question of Osiris's status during the Amarna Period more closely.

Given the distinctive features of Amarna religion enumerated above, it is difficult to see how Osiris could have continued to play any part in the new religious doctrine of Akhenaten. The latter leaves no place for any deities other than the sun god and the king himself. It emphasizes the visible, and no living person could see Osiris or his kingdom of the dead. It de-emphasizes mythology, the history of divinities, and Osiris was important precisely because of his history, in particular, the momentous event of his triumph over death which made it possible for his human followers to do the same. Finally, Amarna religion focuses upon the present, the here and now. Where did this leave room for the hereafter or the god who presided over it?

According to a theory advocated by Grimm and Schlögl, Akhenaten neither proscribed nor ignored Osiris, but rather deliberately took over his functions and attributes, even retaining the god's traditional iconography, so that in effect he became a new Osiris for his subjects, removing any need for the old one. Specifically, they

maintain, Akhenaten was identified with Osiris as the son of the Aten. The evidence they cite in support of their view is chiefly iconographic, consisting of what they claim are two- and three-dimensional representations of the king in the form of that god. Their interpretation of these is not convincing, however. Moreover, their dating of many of them to the reign of Akhenaten is questionable, if not impossible. Thus there is no real basis for thinking that he ever identified himself with Osiris.

Nevertheless, the evidence for continued belief in the Osirian afterlife during the Amarna Period is more abundant than one might have expected. Nor is it confined to a few specific geographical areas or years within Akhenaten's reign. Was he aware of this survival and, if so, was it a matter of concern to him? We cannot say for certain, but if it was, then the king's ability to influence developments in the religious sphere and, in particular, the beliefs of his subjects concerning the afterlife, may have been more circumscribed than is generally supposed. This would conform to the pattern that we have already observed in previous chapters.

The nature of the evidence surveyed invites us to rethink some of our fundamental assumptions about the afterlife in Amarna religion, for example, the idea that Akhenaten thought only in terms of a single world, this one, inhabited by both the living and the dead. References to the west and to the underworld in texts of this time, some of which are found in tombs of high-ranking officials at Amarna itself, indicate otherwise. The term 'underworld' denotes a real place in Amarna sources and is not just a euphemism for 'tomb' or 'burial place' as some have interpreted it. It was a venue where the deceased could enjoy social interaction with others, just as it was in earlier and later periods of Egyptian history.

Another idea that does not really withstand close scrutiny is that Akhenaten was regarded as the sole guarantor of posthumous existence during the Amarna Period, while the Aten, by contrast, was perceived as a remote, unapproachable deity with no real interest in the welfare of the deceased. In fact, the Aten had a more prominent part to play in aspirations for the afterlife than has been realized heretofore. People addressed prayers and requests relating to the next world to him, just as they did those pertaining to this one. Moreover, offering formulas of the Amarna Period provide eloquent testimony of the deceased's desire to see and worship the sun disk, follow him, and kiss the earth before him and his rays.

There is abundant evidence that the Egyptians of this period looked not only to the king for fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations for the afterlife, but to the Aten as well. Far from being a remote and impersonal deity, he was seen as a benefactor who could be approached with confidence for assistance at every stage of the transition from this life to the next. As Martin has noted, the status of Osiris and other deities in the Amarna Period would repay a closer study and analysis. He was referring to traditional Egyptian gods, in particular those associated with the afterlife. But his words apply with equal force to the new divinity introduced by Akhenaten. There is still scope for further elucidation of his role as a god of the hereafter.

Among the beliefs that were abandoned during the Amarna Period was the complex of ideas pertaining to the solar deity's nocturnal passage through the

underworld, in the course of which he encountered and temporarily united with Osiris. This conception becomes especially prominent in the New Kingdom, when it is illustrated in guides to the underworld, the Book of the Dead, and other sources. As a result, some identify it as a product of that time, although others believe that it arose earlier. Moreover, some maintain that there was a further development which took place during the course of the New Kingdom. The conception of the nocturnal union between Re and Osiris changed. No longer was it regarded as a cyclically recurring event of limited duration which took place at a certain point each night. Instead it was seen as a permanent union, effectively creating a new super-deity, a single entity conjoining both Re and Osiris in a way that was totally unprecedented, the 'great god' Re-Osiris. This new conception is called the solar-Osirian unity in Egyptological literature.

Is the idea of a nocturnal merger between Re and Osiris in the underworld exclusively a New Kingdom phenomenon as some maintain? We have already examined the evidence for this view in section 4.14.3. The conclusion reached in that section was that there is no compelling reason to think that any of the underworld guides were composed prior to the New Kingdom. Nor can we document the existence of a fully developed concept of a nocturnal union of Re and Osiris in the underworld at such an early date, although the idea that the sun god entered that region at night already features in some Coffin Text spells.

Did this conception really develop into what some modern scholars call the solar-Osirian unity? To answer this question, we must first establish what is admissible as evidence for such an idea and what is not. It seems reasonable to suggest that if a text is cited as evidence for the solar-Osirian unity then, at a minimum, it should treat Re and Osiris as a single deity rather than two distinct ones, or make reference in some way to the permanent union of those two gods. We have looked carefully at a number of texts and representations that have been cited as evidence for the solar-Osirian unity. These include P. Westcar, the dedicatory inscription of Ramesses II at Abydos, the so-called 'enigmatic' compositions in the tombs of Tutankhamun, Ramesses VI, and Ramesses IX, the Book of the Earth, the Amduat, the Book of Gates, the Book of Caverns, and scenes on coffins and illustrated papyri of the twenty-first dynasty. None of these satisfies the minimal criteria specified above. On the contrary, they clearly distinguish Re and Osiris as separate deities. Therefore they cannot be used as evidence for a conception involving a permanent union between them.

One point frequently overlooked by advocates of the concept of the solar-Osirian unity is the disparity in the relationship between Re and Osiris in the underworld guides and related sources. They are far from being equal. Rather, Re is pre-eminent and Osiris subordinate to him. Osiris rules the underworld, but he exercises his power alongside and under the supervision of Re. Accordingly, the deceased serve two masters rather than one, and their dual cultic affiliation, to both Re and Osiris, is often reflected in texts and representations on stelae and other objects. Awareness of this is a key to understanding a range of phenomena that have been misinterpreted as proof that the two gods were identified with each other.

Our examination of the evidence leads to the conclusion that during the period under consideration Re and Osiris were regarded as separate deities who met and united temporarily each night during the sun god's journey through the underworld, to the mutual benefit of both. The Egyptians described this with the formula 'Re resting in Osiris, Osiris resting in Re'. There are, however, other ways in which Osiris is linked with the sun god in Egyptian sources of this time. He can be the moon who replaces him in the sky at night, or the sun who illumines the underworld during the hours of darkness, just as Re shines over the land of the living during the day. Osiris can even replace Re altogether, being visible in the sky at all times, as the sun during the day and as the moon at night. But statements identifying him in this way are restricted to hymns and other texts recited during the performance of Osiris's cult. What is said to or about the god in such texts is ritually contingent. It is valid within the framework of a particular rite inasmuch as it helps to achieve its intended effect, but it does not describe an objective or wider reality.

The various ways in which Osiris is associated with the sun god all have one important feature in common. They link him with Re as part of an eternally recurring cycle. For this reason, 'solar-Osirian cycle' is preferable to 'solar-Osirian unity' as a term to characterize the relationship between the two gods in all its diverse aspects. The continuation of this cycle was deemed to be essential by the Egyptians, since it in turn ensured the continued existence of the entire cosmos. One further way in which Osiris may have been associated with the sun god during the period under consideration is through syncretism, as reflected in compound names like Re-Osiris. However, the evidence for syncretism involving the two gods at this time is somewhat equivocal. This is because when the name of Re is followed directly by that of Osiris in our sources, it is impossible to be certain whether this means 'Re-Osiris' or 'Re and Osiris'. If the two divine names are simply coordinated, then we have no evidence for syncretism.

If Re rests in Osiris and Osiris rests in Re, what effect does this have upon the relationship between Osiris and the deceased? How do they benefit from the link that he has with the sun god? In this chapter, we have identified four different ways. First, the cycle in which Re and Osiris are linked together ensures that the cosmos continues to function, which is in turn a precondition for the continuity of the afterlife. Without this cycle, there would be no prospect of posthumous existence. Second, the *ba*/body relationship of Re and Osiris provides a model for that between the *ba* and body of every deceased person. Third, the deceased can participate in the cycle that links Re and Osiris, e.g. by travelling in the day and night barks of the sun god. Thus they are fully integrated within that cycle. Fourth and finally, knowledge of what happens in the underworld is valuable in its own right. The deceased benefit not only from the fact that Re rests in Osiris and Osiris in Re, but from knowing about it as well.

It will be noted that the benefits just enumerated do not include identification with either Osiris or Re. We have found no evidence that the Egyptians believed the deceased would be identified with these deities. There are some ritual utterances preserved in New Kingdom sources in which the recitant claims to be Re or Osiris, or asserts the identity of someone else with one of those gods. However, paratextual

evidence like the titles and colophons of the spells in question shows clearly that such claims were only deemed to be valid within the specific context of the ritual in which they were uttered. They did not have wider application in the world beyond the spell. Interaction, not identification, with Re and Osiris, was the intended goal of the utterances in which they occur.

Finally, did the relationship between Re and Osiris benefit all the deceased equally or only a select group among them? Our investigation has shown that the ideas and concepts underlying the guides to the underworld were equally relevant to both royalty and non-royalty. During the New Kingdom only a small number of non-royal individuals included these guides in the decoration of their tombs. A much larger number, however, incorporated their most salient themes and motifs in texts written on papyrus and other media so that they too could benefit from them. The evidence indicates that the Egyptians of the New Kingdom did not envisage a royal afterlife that differed radically from the non-royal one. Both kings and their subjects were admitted to the underworld on equal terms. Once there, they benefited equally from participation in the solar-Osirian cycle.

6

New Rulers, New Beliefs? Osiris and the Dead during the Transition from the Late Period to the Ptolemaic Period

In section 3.5.3 we investigated the claim that the apparently sudden appearance of Osiris as god of the dead in the fifth dynasty was the result of a conscious decision taken by a king or kings in order to achieve a specific political purpose. We concluded that there was insufficient evidence to prove this. The claim was based on an 'adaptive' reading of selected spells in the Pyramid Text corpus. As explained there, an adaptive reading is one which assumes the validity of a particular theory or hypothesis and then proceeds to interpret a text in accordance with it. Thus interpreted, the contents of the text appear to support that view, which then provides the basis for interpreting further texts in the same way. The argument is essentially a circular one, in which no independent proof for the theory underlying the interpretation is ever forthcoming, and so does not convince. Nevertheless, it was worthwhile investigating this question, since it caused us to confront an important problem of broader scope: to what extent is religious change linked to political change in ancient Egypt?

There are some instances where change in the religious sphere is clearly the direct result of a decision or decisions made by an Egyptian king. One good example of this is the Amarna Period, when Akhenaten introduced significant innovations in both cult and belief. In sections 5.4–6 we considered the claim that this king also changed the way in which the relationship between Osiris and the deceased was conceptualized. According to this, Akhenaten identified himself with the god, even to the point of having himself depicted with the iconography and attributes of Osiris, and thus assumed the functions that the deity had performed up until then. We found that this claim was not supported by the evidence that we considered either. Although the cult of Osiris was more widespread during the Amarna Period than is generally assumed, there is nothing to indicate that he was ever incorporated into Akhenaten's theology.

Even if we have rejected the two claims just mentioned, this does not mean that we should ignore the possibility that political factors, whether decisions or programmes of specific kings, or more indirect consequences of political change, may have influenced the nature of Osirian beliefs and how the relationship between him and the deceased

was envisaged in other periods of Egyptian history. Just as we considered this possibility for the third millennium BC and the second millennium BC, we have to consider it for the first millennium BC as well. And in fact, Coulon, Devauchelle, and others have emphasized the important political role played by the god Osiris during that millennium, in particular, the increasing emphasis upon his connection with kingship.[1]

There were many political changes in Egypt during the first millennium BC. The country came under the domination of a range of foreign rulers, Libyan, Assyrian, Kushite, and Persian. In this chapter we will look at one of the most significant political changes, since it was the one that lasted for the longest time, roughly 275 years: the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty at the end of the fourth century BC. In particular, we will investigate two questions. First, did the change to Greek rule at this time have an impact on ideas about the afterlife, and second, did it have an impact on the way in which Egyptians conceptualized the relationship between Osiris and the deceased? In connection with the second question, we will also consider whether or not the rise to prominence of the god Sarapis influenced Egyptian perceptions of that relationship. His elevation to the status of a state deity under Ptolemaic sponsorship is certainly one of the best known instances of a religious change that occurred as a result of royal intervention, and Sarapis was sometimes identified with Osiris, so this will provide a further opportunity to investigate the possibility of political influence on religious affairs.[2]

6.1. THE ADVENT OF THE PTOLEMAIC DYNASTY

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the beginning of what we call the Ptolemaic Period was marked by a major political change. With the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 332 BC the Persian occupation of that country was ended and the occupiers replaced by a new line of Macedonian kings.[3] When

[1] See L. Coulon, 'Le culte osirien au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Une mise en perspective(s)', in L. Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents* (Cairo, 2010), pp. 16–17; L. Coulon and A. Masson, 'Osiris Naref à Karnak', ibid., pp. 146–7; D. Devauchelle, 'Pas d'Apis pour Sarapis!', in A. Gasse, F. Servajean, and C. Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum: Recueil d'études dédiées à Jean-Claude Grenier* 2 (Montpellier, 2012), p. 224.

[2] As will be seen in section 6.7.1, the precise nature of the royal intervention that occurred in the case of Sarapis is debated, in particular, whether it involved introducing a new god to Egypt or simply extending royal patronage to an existing divine cult.

[3] For the expulsion of the Persians and the establishment of Macedonian rule in Egypt, see G. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire* (London and New York, 2001), pp. 9–14; J. Manning, *Land and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 43–4. The extent to which this changed how the country was actually administered is debated. Manning, *Land and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt*, especially pp. 226–41, argues for a greater degree of continuity in this sphere, as well as more regional variation, than some earlier writers have envisaged. See also the same author's *The Last Pharaohs: Egypt under the Ptolemies, 305–30 BC* (Princeton, 2010), where the administrative continuity between the Ptolemaic Period and earlier ones is likewise emphasized.

Alexander's general Ptolemy assumed power, first as satrap in 323 BC and, from 305 onward as king, Egypt came under the control of a dynasty of rulers who, although of foreign origin, were based permanently in the land. The Ptolemies encouraged immigration from Greek-speaking countries. Although Greeks had been settled in Egypt before this time, there were not many of them and they were concentrated in a relatively small number of areas. Now their numbers increased considerably and they spread throughout the entire country. As a result there was more extensive contact between them and the indigenous population.[4]

Some have argued that this led to Greek influence on various aspects of Egyptian life and thought, including ideas about posthumous existence.[5] What evidence do we have for such influence? If new beliefs about the afterlife did emerge during the Ptolemaic Period, how can we tell whether or not they are of foreign origin? To answer these questions, we will look first at conceptions of the hereafter in general, to see if these changed or altered with the advent of the Ptolemies. Then we will do the same with the actual texts that were used to benefit the deceased in the afterlife. Finally, we will look at funerary art, to see whether or not this changed and, if so, whether the new forms adopted reflect genuine changes in belief about the next world.[6]

6.2. CONCEPTIONS OF THE AFTERLIFE IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT

By the beginning of the period we are considering now, three basic conceptions formed the foundation for all Egyptian beliefs and practices pertaining to the afterlife. The first is that of the continued survival of those who die as physical or corporeal entities. The second is that of a hierarchy of divinities and other immortal beings among whom the deceased hope to be integrated. The third conception is one of a causal relationship, whereby the position of the deceased within this hierarchy, and indeed whether they are admitted to it or not, is determined by their conduct while alive.[7] Not all of these

[4] See K. Mueller, *Settlements of the Ptolemies: City Foundations and New Settlement in the Hellenistic World* (Leuven, 2006), pp. 166–80; W. Clarysse and D. Thompson, *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt* 2 (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 140–1; M. Stefanou, 'Waterborne Recruits: The Military Settlers of Ptolemaic Egypt', in K. Buraselis, M. Stefanou, and D. Thompson (eds), *The Ptolemies, the Sea and the Nile: Studies in Waterborne Power* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 108–31; C. Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Cambridge, 2014), especially pp. 197–299.

[5] See, for example, L. Kákosy, 'Probleme der Religion im römerzeitlichen Ägypten', in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 18.5 (Berlin and New York, 1995), p. 2898.

[6] I have examined these questions in some detail in a chapter of the forthcoming Heidelberg *Handbuch altägyptische Religion* entitled 'Todesüberwindung und Leben nach dem Tod in ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit', to which the reader is referred. The discussion that follows, in particular sections 6.2–5, draws upon some of the material presented in that chapter.

[7] See M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), p. 1.

conceptions arose at the same time. As we have seen in previous chapters, some can be traced back earlier than others. Nevertheless, they were all firmly established well before the start of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

In terms of these basic conceptions, there was a significant degree of continuity between the Ptolemaic Period and those preceding it. Osiris, as ruler of the underworld and foremost in the west, was still at the head of the hierarchy which the deceased aspired to join.[8] The venue where their conduct was examined and their fitness to join the ranks of the immortal blessed assessed continued to be the hall of judgement where he presided. The mode of assessment, weighing the deceased's heart in a balance, was unaltered. The assisting deities, Isis, Nephthys, Horus, Anubis, Thoth, the four sons of Horus, and the judges of the underworld, still played their accustomed roles in this process, as they had done since the New Kingdom. The rewards promised to the righteous and the punishments inflicted on the damned likewise remained the same. As in earlier periods, those who passed the test of judgement were declared 'justified' (*mꜣʿ-ḫrw*) and accepted into the following of Osiris.[9]

In the Ptolemaic Period, mummification and its attendant rites continued to be regarded as important for posthumous well-being.[10] In the same way that justification and acceptance into the company of Osiris's followers offered a means of social reintegration for those whom death had cut off from friends and relations, the mummification rites restored the physical integrity of their bodies, transfiguring them and endowing them with a new eternal form. This transfiguration was accomplished in the same manner as before, by means of special spells known as *sakhu* or 'glorifications', which were recited during the period that the deceased spent in the place of embalming prior to burial.[11] As noted in section 4.15.4, the concepts of mummification and justification were closely linked, so much so that the rites associated with the former actually included an assessment of the deceased's character. The embalming table doubled as a judge's tribunal, and if the dead person was found to be guilty of sin, the very processes which should have provided surcease from the suffering inflicted by death became a form of torture from which escape was impossible.[12]

The various aspects in which the blessed dead were supposed to continue their existence in the next life included the *akh*, *ba*, and *ka*. As far as one can judge, the conceptions of these in the Ptolemaic Period remained as they had been before.[13] They were not components or constituent parts into which a person could be divided.

[8] Notwithstanding the role played by Re as overall ruler of the cosmos of which the underworld formed a part, for which, see section 5.9. The continued involvement of the sun god in a supervisory capacity in this sphere during the period now under consideration is well illustrated by a stela dating to the third century BC which shows a deceased person before Osiris. Above this, however, we see a scarab inside a solar disk in the bark of Re. See D. Devauchelle, 'Fier d'être Rhodien et d'avoir vécu 106 ans!', in C. Zivie-Coche and I. Guermeur (eds), '*Parcourir l'éternité*': *Hommages à Jean Yoyotte* 1 (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 424–5. Parallels on other Ptolemaic stelae are cited ibid., p. 410 note 5.

[9] See section 4.15.3.

[10] For mummification techniques in the Graeco-Roman Period, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 30–8.

[11] For these spells, see ibid., pp. 11–12, with references to earlier literature.

[12] Ibid., pp. 6 and 26–7.

[13] See sections 2.1.2–4.

Rather, they connected an individual to groups of other beings or other spheres of existence within the cosmos. According to Egyptian belief, the status of *akh* integrated the deceased within the hierarchy of gods and other inhabitants of the underworld. The *ba* established a link between that domain and the visible, material world, enabling the dead to move freely from one to the other, while the *ka* connected them with the other members of their family, both ancestors and descendants. Thus, instead of fragmenting the self, the real function of these aspects was to extend it, illustrating once again the importance of social integration in the Egyptian conception of resurrection.[14]

6.3. TEXTS FOR THE AFTERLIFE IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT

There was also a significant amount of continuity between the Ptolemaic Period and preceding ones in terms of the texts that were employed to benefit the deceased in the hereafter. Several works composed prior to the rise of the Ptolemies continued to be used after they began to govern Egypt as well. These include the Rite of Opening the Mouth, sections of the Amduat, the Book of Night, and the Litany of Re, as well as utterances from the Pyramid and Coffin Texts.[15] Likewise, the Book of the Dead, first attested in the Second Intermediate Period, remained in use until the first century BC,[16] and some of its constituent spells or texts modelled upon them were employed for even longer.[17]

But this time also witnessed the appearance of a large number of new works intended to revivify the deceased and supply their posthumous needs. Not all of these were written specifically for dead human beings. Several were originally composed for use in the temple cult of Osiris and subsequently adapted for the benefit of ordinary deceased persons so that they too could enjoy the privileges which the texts conferred upon the deity. Among the works thus adapted were glorification spells, offering liturgies, and texts of an apotropaic nature.[18] Examples include the Great Decree Issued to the Nome

[14] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 4–6; M. Smith, 'Resurrection and the Body in Graeco-Roman Egypt', in T. Nicklas, F. Reiterer, and J. Verheyden (eds), *The Human Body in Death and Resurrection* (Berlin, 2009), pp. 32–6.

[15] For copies of these texts from the Graeco-Roman Period, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 16–17; E. Hornung, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Afterlife* (Ithaca, 1999), pp. 30, 123, and 137.

[16] M. Coenen, 'On the Demise of the *Book of the Dead* in Ptolemaic Thebes', *RdE* 52 (2001), p. 71; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 17. Cf. S. Töpfer and M. Müller-Roth, *Das Ende der Totenbuchtradition und der Übergang zum Buch vom Atmen: Die Totenbücher des Monthemhat (pTübingen 2012) und der Tanedjmet (pLouvre N 3085)* (Wiesbaden, 2011), pp. 115–17; J. Quack, 'Redaktion und Kodifizierung im spätzeitlichen Ägypten: Der Fall des Totenbuches', in J. Schaper (ed.), *Die Textualisierung der Religion* (Tübingen, 2009), pp. 32–3; J. Quack, 'A New Demotic Translation of (Excerpts of) a Chapter of the *Book of the Dead*', *JEA* 100 (2014), p. 391 note 51.

[17] See below in this section.

[18] For the practice of adapting Osirian texts for the benefit of ordinary deceased persons, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 61–5.

of the Silent Land,[19] the Recitation of Glorifications which the Two Sisters Performed,[20] and the Ceremony of Glorifying Osiris in the God's Domain.[21] Many of these incorporate material from much earlier periods.

Texts for the afterlife composed specifically for the benefit of deceased humans during the Graeco-Roman Period were of various types. Some of the best known include the Book of Traversing Eternity,[22] the so-called Books of Transformation,[23] the Letter for Breathing which Isis Made for her Brother Osiris,[24] and the First and Second Letters for Breathing.[25] These have a close relationship with texts of earlier periods as well. In a number of cases, these new compositions took one particular theme from an earlier work or works and developed it at greater length.

The Book of Traversing Eternity, for example, was intended to ensure that the *ba* of the deceased could leave the underworld, return to earth, and participate in the cults celebrated in various temples. All known copies of this text are of Ptolemaic or Roman date. But it reflects a much older conception, that of 'going forth by day', the belief that the dead could return to this world. Although this idea became increasingly prominent in the aftermath of the Amarna Period, the expression 'going forth by day' is already attested in the Old Kingdom. As we have seen, texts of the eleventh and twelfth dynasties in which the deceased express the wish to return to Abydos to participate in the mysteries of Osiris conducted there are among the first sources to provide detailed information about what this actually involved.[26] In some respects, the Book of Traversing Eternity can be seen as a culmination of this development.[27]

Books of Transformation are collections of spells intended to permit the deceased to assume various non-human forms in the afterlife. The idea that the dead could do this is attested in Egyptian texts from the Old Kingdom to the Roman Period. Several spells in the Pyramid Texts refer to their beneficiary's transformation into different animals, birds, and insects. The Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead contain utterances that enable the deceased to assume such forms as well. Starting in the Ptolemaic Period, we begin to find entire compositions that were devoted to this subject. Assuming the various non-human forms enumerated in these texts was believed to enhance the deceased's ability to leave the underworld and return to the earth. It also permitted them to serve or follow those deities who were associated with the forms in question.[28]

[19] A. Kucharek, *Die Klagelieder von Isis und Nephthys in Texten der Griechisch-Römischen Zeit* (Heidelberg, 2010), pp. 48–9 and 275–423; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 67–95.

[20] Kucharek, *Die Klagelieder von Isis und Nephthys in Texten der Griechisch-Römischen Zeit*, pp. 31–6 and 56–96; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 124–34.

[21] Kucharek, *Die Klagelieder von Isis und Nephthys in Texten der Griechisch-Römischen Zeit*, pp. 36–42 and 97–165; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 135–51.

[22] F.-R. Herbin, *Le livre de parcourir l'éternité* (Leuven, 1994); Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 395–436.

[23] Ibid., pp. 610–49.

[24] F.-R. Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts* (London, 2008), pp. 11–49; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 462–98.

[25] Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts*, pp. 50–116; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 499–525.

[26] See section 4.12.3.

[27] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 395–6.

[28] Ibid., pp. 610 and 614–15. For assumption of a deity's form as a mark of affiliation with him or her, see sections 4.9.1 and 4.14.4.

The various letters for breathing, as their titles imply, were primarily concerned with ensuring that the deceased could breathe freely in the afterlife. This emphasis is understandable, since respiration is essential for survival. But the noun 'breathing' was also employed in these texts as a paradigmatic term encompassing all the diverse aspects of posthumous existence. The entire range of benefits and privileges which the deceased hoped to enjoy could be summarized under that heading. One of the most important of these benefits was admission to the realm of Osiris. Thus another function of the letters for breathing was to serve as passports or letters of recommendation which the deceased had to present to the inhabitants of the underworld as proof that they were worthy of acceptance into their company.[29]

Although letters for breathing are not attested before the Ptolemaic Period, they do have strong links with texts of earlier date. The Second Letter for Breathing, for instance, whose most distinctive feature is a litany requesting that the deceased's name be made to flourish like those of various divinities, has antecedents extending as far back as the Pyramid Texts.[30] Likewise, the First Letter for Breathing incorporates material drawn from the Book of the Dead, notably Spells 18–20 and 42. The first three of these deal with the deceased's justification in a series of different tribunals, the last equates the individual parts of their body with various divinities.[31]

The Letter for Breathing which Isis Made for her Brother Osiris was directly influenced by the Book of the Dead as well, in particular Spell 125 which is concerned with the deceased's justification, an essential prerequisite for their entry into the underworld. This letter incorporates an abbreviated version of that spell's 'negative confession' in which the deceased denies any imputation of sin. In many copies this is illustrated by the vignette associated with Spell 125, which depicts the weighing of the heart in a balance before Osiris. Another illustration found in copies of this work is a scene showing the deceased before the goddess Hathor in the form of a cow. This appears as a vignette in some copies of Book of the Dead Spell 162. By incorporating such texts and images, the Letter for Breathing which Isis Made was able to function as a substitute or replacement for the Book of the Dead after the latter had passed out of usage.[32]

The belief that admittance to the underworld could be obtained by means of a passport or similar document granting the privilege is itself of considerable antiquity in Egypt, even if the extant specimens of such passports are not.[33] As early as the Coffin Texts, one finds statements that the deceased are assigned a rank or social position in the underworld hierarchy by the authority of decrees promulgated by a deity.[34] The

[29] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 466–7. [30] Ibid., p. 516. [31] Ibid., pp. 501–4.

[32] For the connection between this letter and Book of the Dead Spell 125, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 463 and 466. The relationship between it and Spell 162 is discussed in A. Wüthrich, *Éléments de théologie thébaine: Les chapitres supplémentaires du Livre des Morts* (Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 56–60.

[33] For a 'passport-type' document of Third Intermediate Period date composed of extracts from the Book of the Dead, see M. Valloggia, 'Le papyrus Bodmer 108: Un "passeport d'éternité" du début de la Troisième Période Intermédiaire', in W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, and H. Willems (eds), *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years. Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur* 1 (Leuven, 1998), pp. 441–53.

[34] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 523 and 601.

noun used to denote such ordinances actually has a rather wider semantic range than this, however, and it is interesting to note that in bilingual texts it appears as a synonym for the Egyptian word for 'letter'. Thus decrees of this type can be seen as precursors of the later letters for breathing.[35]

6.4. FORM AND MEANING IN FUNERARY ART OF THE PTOLEMAIC AND ROMAN PERIODS

6.4.1. Naturalistic depictions of the dead as evidence of Greek influence on Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife?

When we look at the sphere of funerary art, we do see some distinctive new features in the Ptolemaic Period. One is the increase in the number of what might be called more naturalistic depictions of the dead, especially in the later years of Ptolemaic rule. Some attribute these more naturalistic depictions to the influence of Greek artistic conventions.[36] If they are correct, does this indicate that Greek conceptions of the afterlife were influencing traditional Egyptian ones as well? The essential problem here is that of correlating form and meaning. How closely linked are they? In some instances, there is a one-to-one correspondence between the way a thing is represented and what it signifies, so that form conveys meaning and the meaning is inherent in the form. But this is by no means invariably the case. It is equally possible for a single idea to be given visual expression in more than one way. When this happens, form is incidental to the meaning of what is represented.[37]

A good illustration of this is provided by a mummy case of Ptolemaic date from Akhmim, Berlin Äg. Inv. 13462, one of a group of such objects which share the same features. This particular specimen was made for a woman called Tatriphis and depicts her with her arms at her sides, wearing a multi-coloured dress and a shawl fastened between her breasts with a distinctive type of knot. This woman is also commemorated in the demotic inscription on a stela, Cairo CG 31123.[38] Unlike the mummy case, which portrays her in the more naturalistic manner just described, the lunette of the stela depicts her in traditional Egyptian guise, wearing a sheath dress and a long tripartite wig. Yet both representations are intended to show the deceased in her

[35] Ibid., pp. 308 and 603–4. Note that the First Letter for Breathing actually mentions a decree or decrees promulgated for the deceased (Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 507), as do notes on the versos of other texts of a similar nature (ibid., pp. 522, 528, and 541).

[36] See below in this section.

[37] Cf. C. Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt: Art, Identity and Funerary Religion* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 7 and 11–12.

[38] For the two objects, see M. Smith, 'Dating Anthropoid Mummy Cases from Akhmim: The Evidence of the Demotic Inscriptions', in M. Bierbrier (ed.), *Portraits and Masks: Burial Customs in Roman Egypt* (London, 1997), pp. 66–71 with plates 31–4.

transfigured posthumous state. The effigy on the mummy case has a gilded face, a traditional mark of divinity,[39] while the stela actually shows her in the company of Osiris and an unnamed goddess, probably Isis. Thus the meaning they convey is the same.

Presumably both objects were commissioned and paid for by the surviving members of the deceased woman's family, who were therefore untroubled by the differences in their iconography, which to their minds must have represented two different yet equally valid ways of depicting the state which they expected their departed loved one to assume in the afterlife. Evidently, their expectations were the traditional ones. Otherwise, they would hardly have accepted the iconography of the stela, or even have commissioned the object in the first place. Thus the portrayal of Tatriphis on her mummy case represents not a new way of conceptualizing life after death, but rather the adoption of new artistic conventions to express an older symbolism.

Whether the conventions in question were of native or non-native origin is much disputed. Some think that the costume in which Tatriphis is depicted on her mummy case has earlier Egyptian antecedents,[40] while others regard it as typically foreign.[41] For our purposes, however, the question of whether the iconography of this object displays foreign influence or not is largely irrelevant. It is not unusual to find an individual portrayed in both Hellenistic and Egyptian mode in different scenes on the same object or on different walls of the same monument, or to find representations showing the dead in Hellenistic dress surrounded by such traditional Egyptian motifs as the weighing of the heart or Anubis administering to a recumbent mummy on a lion-shaped bier.[42] Even mummy portraits, which show the deceased in pure Hellenistic style, could be inscribed with Egyptian formulas like those found on contemporary mummy labels expressing the traditional hope that those so depicted would live in the presence of Osiris in the hereafter.[43]

Some maintain that these two modes of representing the deceased were intended to portray them at different stages of their posthumous transfiguration: the more contemporary iconography incorporating non-Egyptian fashions of dress depicted them at

[39] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 33.

[40] Cf. Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 64, 70–8, 81, 90, and 129.

[41] W. Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt: Life in Death for Rich and Poor* (London, 2003), pp. 127–8; A. Schweitzer, 'L'evolution stylistique et iconographique des parures de cartonnage d'Akhmim du début de l'époque ptolémaïque à l'époque romaine', *BIFAO* 98 (1998), p. 336.

[42] For examples, see Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 57–61, 103–5, 143–7, and 167; A. von Lieven, 'Ikonographie und Stil im Spannungsfeld zwischen ägyptischer Tradition und griechisch-römischem Einfluss', *Städel-Jahrbuch* 19 (2004), pp. 309–10; B. Hellinckx, 'Studying the Funerary Art of Roman Egypt', *CdE* 85 (2010), pp. 134–5.

[43] See E. Doxiadis, *The Mysterious Fayum Portraits: Faces from Ancient Egypt* (London, 1995), p. 173, also K. Parlasca, *Mumienporträts und verwandte Denkmäler* (Wiesbaden, 1966), plate 28.1, for a mummy portrait with a mummy label actually painted on it. Nor should it be forgotten that the portraits themselves were originally attached to mummies, many of which were decorated with traditional Egyptian motifs, as noted in L. Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies from Ancient Egypt* (Chicago, 1995), pp. 3–7, who emphasizes the need to see portrait and mummy as integral parts of a whole rather than separate elements. For the range of Egyptian motifs depicted on mummies with portraits still attached, see ibid., pp. 45–64.

the beginning of that process, while the traditional mummiform iconography showed them at its end.[44] This argument ignores the fact that, from an Egyptian perspective, there is no distinction between mummy wrappings and clothing, of whatever style. The wrappings are the clothing and vice versa. One is ritually transformed into the other, not once but continually as part of an unending cycle.[45] Furthermore, the argument is directly contradicted by representations that show the deceased wearing the contemporary dress of the living in the presence of Osiris, and thus at the end of the transfiguration process.[46]

The evidence of such representations is confirmed by texts as well, for example the first century AD demotic narrative that recounts the visit of Setna Khaemwast and his son Siosiris to the underworld (P. BM EA 10822).[47] There they observe someone in close proximity to Osiris dressed in the garments that a wealthy man would wear in the world of the living.[48] In the light of what has been said in this section, it is significant that these are said to be made of byssos, the same material used for the finest quality mummy wrappings. Siosiris explains to his father that the person dressed in this opulent fashion was found to have been virtuous on earth, and as a consequence has been given a position among the noble *akhs*. He is now 'a man of the god's domain who serves Sokar-Osiris, being near the place where Osiris is'.[49] This passage proves that those who have been transfigured can wear the garments of the living as well.

The examples cited in the preceding paragraphs show clearly that how an individual chose to be portrayed on items of burial equipment (or how relatives chose to have that individual portrayed) had nothing to do with the nature of his or her hopes and expectations for the next world. In such cases, form was incidental to meaning, which could be conveyed in more than one way. The repertoire of possible modes of representing the deceased was more extensive in the Graeco-Roman Period than at any other time in Egyptian history. Iconography incorporating non-Egyptian fashions of dress and adornment was only one of a wide range of available options, and choosing it in preference, or as a complement, to more traditional iconography did not imply that those who made that choice had abandoned indigenous beliefs about the afterlife in favour of foreign ones.[50]

[44] See von Lieven, *Städel-Jahrbuch* 19 (2004), pp. 309–12; Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 13–14, 88, 142, 174, and 247; Hellinckx, *CdE* 85 (2010), pp. 135–6.

[45] See M. Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 38–40.

[46] See, for instance, those on Roman Period shrouds published in S. Morenz, *Religion und Geschichte des alten Ägypten* (Weimar, 1975), Abb. 3, 9, and 10 (there wrongly described as 'Das Werden zu Osiris'). For additional bibliography on objects of this type, see Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 168–73; Hellinckx, *CdE* 85 (2010), p. 146. A Ptolemaic example of such a representation is published in G. Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden im ersten vorchristlichen Jahrtausend* (Mainz am Rhein, 2003), pp. 236–7.

[47] For annotated translation and bibliography, see F. Hoffmann and J. Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (Berlin, 2007), pp. 118–37 and 340–3.

[48] F. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis: Atlas* (London, 1900), plate 2, lines 8–9.

[49] Ibid., plate 2, lines 9–13.

[50] Compare Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 22, 26, 80, 124, and 155.

6.4.2. Juxtaposition of Egyptian and Graeco-Roman motifs in funerary art

There are some cases, however, where the relationship between form and meaning is more complex. These mostly belong to the Roman Period rather than the Ptolemaic Period, but it will be useful to look at some examples here and explore the issues that they raise. One well-known instance is the relief of the god Anubis on the right side of the entrance inside the Main Tomb in the Great Catacomb at Kom el-Shoqafa in Alexandria.[51] This has been dated to the first or early second century AD. It depicts the god in anthropomorphic form with a jackal's head, standing in a classical chiastic pose. He wears the armour of a Roman soldier and holds a spear and shield.[52] Thus an Egyptian deity has been given non-Egyptian attributes. This works on two levels. Anubis is well attested as a guardian of the tomb, so the addition of the armour and weapons could be seen as a way of enhancing his protective capabilities.[53] If so, then form not only corresponds to meaning, but emphasizes it as well. At the same time, the non-Egyptian attributes and the general stylistic treatment of the figure could be devices to make it more acceptable to viewers whose tastes were not conditioned by the standards of traditional Egyptian art.[54]

A figure like this one raises many questions. Who had the idea to depict Anubis in the garb of a Roman soldier in this tomb? Was it the patron who commissioned the relief or the artist who executed the work? Does the appearance of the figure tell us anything about this person's conceptions of the afterlife or expectations for the next world? The decision to employ a figure of Anubis as a guardian at the door of the tomb would seem to imply a certain amount of familiarity with traditional Egyptian ideas about the hereafter on the part of the one who planned its decoration. On the other hand, there is a relief depicting another guardian on the left side of the entrance. This figure is armoured as well and stands in a pose similar to that of Anubis. However, the lower part of his body is that of a serpent. Various identifications have been proposed for this guardian. Some see here another form of Anubis. But others identify the figure as Seth-Typhon.[55] If the latter identification is correct, then this would indicate that the

[51] See M. Venit, 'Egypt as Metaphor—Decoration and Eschatology in the Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria', in D. Robinson and A. Wilson (eds), *Alexandria and the North-Western Delta* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 245–6; M. Venit, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria: The Theater of the Dead* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 134 and 143–4; I. Kaplan, *Grabmalerei und Grabreliefs der Römerzeit* (Vienna, 1999), p. 79 and plate 37.

[52] For other representations of Anubis in Roman armour, see F. Naerebout, 'Cuius regio, eius religio? Rulers and Religious Change in Greco-Roman Egypt', in L. Bricault and M. Versluys (eds), *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis* (Leiden and Boston, 2014), p. 44.

[53] Ibid., p. 49.

[54] See Venit in Robinson and Wilson (eds), *Alexandria and the North-Western Delta*, p. 245. For other examples of Egyptian deities portrayed in Greek or Roman style, see the representations on wooden panels discussed in V. Rondot, *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte* (Paris, 2013).

[55] See Venit, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria*, p. 145; Kaplan, *Grabmalerei und Grabreliefs der Römerzeit*, pp. 79–80.

person responsible for the tomb's decoration actually possessed little understanding of Egyptian conceptions of the hereafter, since the use of a form of the god Seth as a guardian of the entrance would be highly inappropriate.

Another interesting example is provided by a stela of the Roman Period from Kom Abu Billu. This depicts Hades carrying Persephone off to the realm of the dead in his chariot. The style of these figures is classical. But to the right is a standing figure of Anubis, shown in traditional Egyptian guise, holding the key to the underworld in his hand.[56] What does this composition tell us about the afterlife beliefs of the person who conceived it? Did he imagine a sort of ecumenical underworld populated by a mixture of Greek and Egyptian deities? Or one in which Hades had ousted Osiris as ruler but Anubis was still clinging to his position as gatekeeper?

In seeking to answer these questions it is important to remember that the Greeks did not regard their pantheon of deities as distinct from the Egyptian one. Rather they were prepared to accept the essential identity of the two divine corporations, even though the individual deities comprising them were known under different names. For them, therefore, the substitution of an Egyptian deity for his or her Greek counterpart in a scene like the one on the Kom Abu Billu stela would not pose any problems. In Greek mythology, access to the underworld was controlled by Cerberus, a canine like Anubis.[57] So it is possible that the Egyptian god simply replaces him in this scene.

But Venit has suggested other reasons why an Egyptian figure or symbol might be preferred to a Greek one by an artist or patron. One is 'to provide an iconographical motif for a Greek eschatological concept that lacks a visual motif in Greek mortuary schema'.[58] In the case of our stela, the concept in question could be that of a blessed abode of the dead like the one envisaged in Egyptian sources as opposed to the rather dreary underworld that features in most Greek texts and representations.[59] Another reason cited by her is that Egyptian or Egyptianizing figures were perceived to have an intrinsic authority and efficacy. Thus, what was significant was not so much the identity of a particular figure used in a composition but the fact that it was Egyptian and therefore stood for or symbolized Egypt.[60]

Scenes depicting the abduction of Persephone are found in a number of tombs, both in Egypt and elsewhere.[61] These are in pure classical style, and no Egyptian figures intrude as in the case of the Kom Abu Billu stela. One such representation is distinctive, however, not for its content or for stylistic reasons, but by virtue of the scene with which it is juxtaposed. The representation in question is painted on the rear wall of the sarcophagus niche of tomb 4 in the so-called 'Hall of Caracalla' (Catacomb 2) at Kom

[56] Ibid., p. 43 and plate 11; Venit, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria*, pp. 145–6; von Lieven, *Städel-Jahrbuch* 19 (2004), pp. 312–13.

[57] See C. Walde, 'Cerberus', in H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds), *Brill's New Pauly* 3 (Leiden and Boston, 2003), p. 143.

[58] Venit in Robinson and Wilson (eds), *Alexandria and the North-Western Delta*, p. 252.

[59] Ibid., pp. 248–9. [60] Ibid., pp. 246–7.

[61] Ibid., pp. 253–4; Kaplan, *Grabmalerei und Grabreliefs der Römerzeit*, pp. 42–4 and plate 11; von Lieven, *Städel-Jahrbuch* 19 (2004), pp. 312–13; Rondot, *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte*, p. 279.

el-Shoqafa. Immediately above it is a scene showing Osiris (or the deceased with Osirian attributes) on a lion-shaped bier with Isis and Nephthys at either end. Anubis stands over him and applies unguent to his mummy.[62] This is one of a number of places in tomb 4 and the one facing it (no. 3) where scenes depicting episodes from the myths of Persephone and Osiris are juxtaposed in two separate registers, the former always in classical style and the latter in Egyptian style.[63] The tombs in question have been dated to the end of the first century AD.[64]

As many have noted, the myths of Persephone and Osiris share a number of common features.[65] Both protagonists experience death unwillingly but are restored to life through the intervention of others. As a result, the fertility of the earth is renewed and crops are enabled to grow. Moreover, both hold positions of authority in the underworld. These similarities undoubtedly account for the fact that episodes from their respective myths are juxtaposed in tombs 3 and 4 at Kom el-Shoqafa. But what does this juxtaposition tell us about the religious views of those responsible? Did they believe equally in both deities?[66] Or did they simply see in these scenes two different but complementary ways of evoking the grander overarching concept of victory over death?[67] It is impossible for us to give definitive answers to these questions. What is of particular interest from our perspective, however, is the way that form relates to meaning in scenes of this nature. Within each constituent register of a scene, the two coincide. In the upper register, Egyptian deities are shown in Egyptian style, while in the lower one Greek deities are shown in classical style. But the juxtaposition of the two registers alters this subtly. Now the same meaning is conveyed by two different forms, each reflecting a different cultural perspective. Thus form nuances meaning, without fundamentally altering it.

6.4.3. Textual analogues to the juxtaposition of Egyptian and Graeco-Roman motifs in funerary art

Analogues for the sort of representations that we have been considering exist in written sources as well. A good example is the Greek inscription on a stela, now in the Louvre, which is thought to have come from Abydos (N 329).[68] This dates to the first

[62] See Kaplan, *Grabmalerei und Grabreliefs der Römerzeit*, p. 137 and plate 46.

[63] See ibid., pp. 135–8, plates 38, 42–4, and 47.

[64] Ibid., pp. 138–9.

[65] For details of the former, see C. Sourvinou Inwood, 'Persephone, Kore', in H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds), *Brill's New Pauly* 10 (Leiden and Boston, 2007), pp. 811–14.

[66] Osiris and Persephone are mentioned in conjunction in a Greek magical text of the third or fourth century AD inscribed on a lead tablet found at Hermopolis. See R. Daniel and F. Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum* 1 (Opladen, 1990), p. 134, lines 22–3. Although we have evidence for an Egyptian cult of the goddess Demeter, the mother of Persephone (see Rondot, *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte*, p. 279), there is nothing to suggest that her daughter was ever worshipped by Egyptians.

[67] See Venit, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria*, p. 146.

[68] See É. Bernand, *Inscriptions grecques d'Égypte et de Nubie au Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1992), pp. 144–5; N. Bel, C. Giroire, F. Gombert-Meurice, and M.-H. Rutschowscaya (eds), *L'Orient romain et byzantin au Louvre* (Paris, 2012), pp. 58–9.

century AD. The stela's lunette shows Anubis conducting the deceased into the presence of Osiris. Below this are ten lines of text, which record the speech of the individual for whom the stela was made. He identifies himself as Apollon (or Apollos) and says that, having died prematurely, he is now a servant at the seat (θῶκος) of the Abydene Osiris. He has not set foot in the abode of the dead, however. Nor has he drunk from the waters of the river of forgetfulness. Rather, Hermes has conducted him to the Elysian field and established him there.

The text on this stela displays an interesting mixture of Greek and Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife. The river of forgetfulness and the Elysian field belong to the former, while Osiris belongs to the latter. At first sight the words of the text and the scene in the lunette seem to contradict each other. The inscription says that the deceased is conducted to the dwelling place of the blessed by Hermes whereas the representation shows him being led by Anubis. The discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the two gods were sometimes equated by the Greeks, since both performed the function of *psychopompos*, or guide of the dead. They could even be combined into a syncretistic deity called Hermanubis.[69] Thus the reference to Hermes leading the deceased in the text could be interpreted as an allusion to Anubis who is shown doing the same thing in the scene above.

Although both the Elysian field and the river of forgetfulness are undoubtedly Greek conceptions, they do have counterparts in Egyptian sources as well. Like the Greeks, the Egyptians imagined that there were specific regions in the hereafter, for example, the field of offerings, reserved specifically for the blessed, to which the less favoured deceased were denied access.[70] The latter are sometimes characterized as 'the dead' (*mwt.w*), with an implicit pejorative sense as in the Greek text on the Louvre stela.[71] While it is true that we find no reference to waters of forgetfulness in Egyptian sources, nevertheless the Egyptians placed great importance on the preservation of the memory in the afterlife, since this was considered to be indispensable for safeguarding one's identity.[72]

Harmonization of Egyptian and Greek conceptions of the hereafter was facilitated by features like these that provided a common or shared point of reference between the two cultures. Further evidence of this is provided by the demotic narrative recounting the visit of Setna and Siosiris to the underworld, to which reference has already been made in section 6.4.1. As they traverse the realm of the dead, the protagonists witness the torments which various sinners have been condemned to suffer. One group is forced to plait ropes which are chewed up by donkeys as fast as they are finished. Another group scramble to reach supplies of bread and water suspended above them,

[69] See M. Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507* (London, 1987), p. 96, and literature cited there.

[70] See J. Leclant, 'Earu-Gefilde', in W. Helck and E. Otto (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1975), pp. 1156–60.

[71] Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 160; Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507*, p. 115.

[72] Ibid., p. 107.

but their efforts are frustrated by those who dig pits beneath their feet.[73] The same torments are inflicted upon Oknos and Tantalos in Greek mythology, and most scholars are in agreement that the author of the demotic narrative has borrowed them from a Greek source.[74] But this borrowing was facilitated by the fact that the torment of sinners was already an established feature of Egyptian depictions of the underworld, even if those who produced them did not envisage precisely the same punishments as the Greeks did.[75]

6.4.4. Archaeological evidence for Greek influence on Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife?

Archaeological evidence provides yet another example of how a shared point of reference made it easier for a custom to be transmitted from one culture to another. The Greeks believed that the ferryman Charon conveyed the dead across the rivers of the underworld. The fare he charged for this was one obol. To ensure that the deceased could pay, it was customary to place a coin in the mouth or hand of the corpse before burial. Some Egyptians adopted this custom as well. Although most attested examples of mummies with coins in their mouths or hands date to the Roman Period, there are a few from the Ptolemaic Period too, for instance, those in a cache of burials discovered in the forecourt of the pyramid temple of Menkaure at Giza.[76] For the Egyptians, this was not a radical step, since the idea of a ferryman with whom one had to negotiate in order to cross over to the land of the dead had figured in their conceptions of the afterlife for centuries.[77] The only real innovation was the coin, since there was no such thing as money in earlier periods of Egyptian history. But since coins were now a common feature of everyday life in this world, it was reasonable to assume that they would be in the next one as well.

6.4.5. Form and meaning in funerary art: summary of evidence

Examples like those discussed in sections 6.4.2–4 demonstrate clearly that some intermingling of Greek and Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife took place. Greeks

[73] See Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, plate 2, lines 1 and 16–17.

[74] See F. Hoffmann, 'Seilflechter in der Unterwelt', *ZPE* 100 (1994), pp. 339–46; G. Vittmann, 'Tradition und Neuerung in der demotischen Literatur', *ZÄS* 125 (1998), pp. 68–9.

[75] See J. Zandee, *Death as an Enemy According to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions* (Leiden, 1960).

[76] Vittmann, *ZÄS* 125 (1998), p. 69 note 57; Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt*, p. 129; S. Farid, 'Preliminary Report on the Excavations of the Antiquities Department at Kôm Abû Billo', *ASAE* 61 (1973), p. 26; S. El-Nassery and G. Wagner, 'Nouvelles stèles de Kom Abu Bellou', *BIFAO* 78 (1978), p. 234; S. D'Auria, P. Lacovara, and C. Roehrig (eds), *Mummies and Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston, 1988), pp. 195–6.

[77] See M. Heerma van Voss, 'Fährmann', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 2 (Wiesbaden, 1977), p. 86.

borrowed ideas from Egyptians and vice versa. Three important points should be noted, however. The first is that virtually all of the evidence for such borrowing comes from the Roman Period rather than the one now under consideration. Thus it cannot be linked with the rise of the Ptolemaic dynasty. The second is that it appears to have little impact on the relationship between Osiris and the deceased. The Greek inscription on the stela of Apollon (or Apollos), for instance, makes reference to Hermes, the Elysian field, and the river of forgetfulness. Nevertheless, the owner of the stela still characterizes himself as a servant of Osiris of Abydos, just as Egyptians had been doing for millennia.

Similarly, the author of the demotic Setna narrative incorporates elements drawn from Greek mythology in his story, specifically the torments inflicted upon sinners in the underworld. But the dead are still judged before the tribunal of Osiris in this account. He punishes the wicked and rewards the virtuous. The latter are transfigured and accepted among his followers, in whose company they enjoy the traditional benefits of association with the god.[78] So the addition of the Greek elements does not affect the basic conception of the deity and his relation to the deceased, which remains as it was before.

The third point to note is that this post-Ptolemaic evidence confirms what we learned from our analysis of the naturalistic representations of the deceased in the funerary art of the Ptolemaic Period itself. Changes affecting the form in which something is represented, even where these involve the adoption of non-Egyptian features, do not necessarily indicate a change in its meaning. Thus, form is incidental to meaning in some cases. But we have also seen that the use of a different form can actually enhance or add to meaning. Moreover, in cases where a single idea is given visual expression in more than one way, the different forms used to express it need not be parts of the same composition. Two different compositions, each with its own distinct iconography and style, can be juxtaposed in such a way that they permit the viewer to contemplate an idea from two contrasting yet complementary perspectives.

6.5. STRATEGIES FOR INVESTIGATING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

There are various strategies for investigating continuity and change in a society's religious beliefs and practices. One is to look at evidence from a wide range of different time periods, to see what is universal or constant and what is not. The evidence we have considered in section 6.2 indicates that Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife during the Ptolemaic Period include many features which can be described as universal or constant, inasmuch as they are attested in nearly all periods of Egyptian history.

[78] See Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, plate 2, lines 4–8.

Likewise, a number of texts employed for the benefit of the deceased in earlier periods remained in use at this time, while newly composed texts were based firmly on traditional ideas of long standing. Although some distinctive new features do appear in the funerary art of the Ptolemaic Period, there is no evidence that these reflect any changes in Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife. Forms may have changed, but meaning remained the same. This picture may have altered somewhat in the Roman Period, but that is a matter which should be addressed separately.

Another strategy is to focus more narrowly upon evidence from two consecutive phases of a society's history, to ascertain the extent to which beliefs and practices were carried over from one to another. Employing this strategy we obtain results similar to those yielded by the first one. In addition to the areas cited in the preceding paragraph, in such key features as the sort of rites performed to ensure the deceased's posthumous survival and how tombs were provisioned to supply their needs in the next world, there was little change, if any, between the Late Period and the Ptolemaic Period immediately after it. Items of burial equipment used in the former like shabtis, canopic boxes, hypocephali, and Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figures continued to be used in the latter as well. In fact, it is often difficult or impossible to determine whether a particular burial belongs to the thirtieth dynasty or to the early Ptolemaic Period.[79] Combining these two strategies provides us with the answer to the first of the two questions that we have selected for investigation in this chapter. As far as one can judge from the textual, representational, and archaeological evidence, the change to Greek rule at this time did not have a significant impact on ideas about the afterlife.

6.6. DESIGNATIONS OF THE DECEASED AS EVIDENCE FOR THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH OSIRIS IN THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

We can now look specifically at the relationship between the deceased and Osiris. Since the evidence we have considered so far supports the idea that the transition from the Late Period to the Ptolemaic Period was characterized by continuity rather than change where conceptions about posthumous existence are concerned, it would be surprising if this were not the case with beliefs about the relations of Osiris with the dead as well. Nevertheless, some have argued that the Egyptian conception of the deceased individual and that person's relation to Osiris did undergo a substantial alteration around

[79] See Grajetzki, *Burial Customs in Ancient Egypt*, p. 123. On Late Period burial practices and artefacts, see J. Quack, 'Grab und Grabausstattung im späten Ägypten', in A. Berlejung and B. Janowski (eds), *Tod und Jenseits im alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt* (Tübingen, 2009), pp. 597–629; D. Aston, 'Dynasty 26, Dynasty 30, or Dynasty 27? In Search of the Funerary Archaeology of the Persian Period', in A. Leahy and J. Tait (eds), *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H.S. Smith* (London, 1999), pp. 17–22; A. Dodson and S. Ikram, *The Tomb in Ancient Egypt* (London, 2008), pp. 288–92.

the time of the Macedonian conquest, and these are the arguments that we will consider next.

As we saw in section 3.10, as early as the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom the name of the deceased could be preceded by that of the god Osiris in certain contexts and certain types of spell. The dead continued to be designated in this way right up until the end of Egyptian history. From the days of Champollion in the early nineteenth century, many Egyptologists have interpreted the two names thus juxtaposed as standing in apposition to each other, translating this combination as 'Osiris NN' and understanding it to signify that the dead person was actually identified with the deity, an interpretation which is still repeated in many books about ancient Egyptian religion.[80] As shown in sections 3.10.1 and 3.10.4, however, the locution *Wsi̯r* NN does not identify the deceased with Osiris. Rather it associates them with that god in a particular type of relationship where the deity looks after them and provides their needs. In establishing the significance of the locution there, we left open the question of how it should actually be translated. An important piece of Middle Kingdom evidence bearing upon this was presented in section 4.10.4.3, and some preliminary conclusions offered there. Here we will investigate the question more closely using the full range of available evidence from all periods of Egyptian history.

6.6.1. The locution *Wsi̯r n* NN and previous attempts to explain its significance

Some texts for the afterlife employ a variant form of the locution *Wsi̯r* NN, viz. *Wsi̯r n* NN, in which the genitival word *n*, 'of', is inserted between the name of Osiris and that of the deceased, thus designating them explicitly as 'Osiris of NN' rather than 'Osiris NN'. This variant form is by no means rare. More than 200 examples are known, and these occur in hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic texts.[81] Thus they are not restricted to sources written in a particular Egyptian script. Nor are they restricted to texts from a particular region, since examples have been forthcoming from all parts of Egypt. Moreover, the variant form *Wsi̯r n* NN is attested in texts written for deceased individuals of varying social positions, ranging from a vizier to people of much humbler rank, so its use is not conditioned by wealth or status either.

Various explanations have been advanced by Egyptologists to explain the significance of this variant form with the added *n*. Since the first instances of it to come to scholarly attention were found in texts dating to the Graeco-Roman Period, it was assumed that it must be a development specific to that time. One view maintained that

[80] M. Smith, 'Osiris NN or Osiris of NN?', in B. Backes, I. Munro, and S. Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen: Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuch-Symposiums 2005* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 325–6.

[81] M. Smith, 'New References to the Deceased as *Wsi̯r n NN* from the Third Intermediate Period and the Earliest Reference to a Deceased Woman as *Ḥ.t-Ḥr NN*', *RdE* 63 (2012), pp. 187–92; Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, pp. 326–7.

the Egyptians formulated a new conception of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased under the influence of the Greeks. Whereas before the dead person, although identified with the deity, nevertheless retained his own personality to some degree, now the boundary between man and god was completely obliterated, the two being merged in a mystical union which permitted no separation between them. Such was the perfection of this union that the earthly personality of the deceased was incapable of participating in it and a new Osirian form had to come into existence, the 'Osiris of NN'.[82]

In fact, however, this claim is easily disproved, since the locution 'Osiris of NN', with the word 'of' explicitly written between the names of the god and the dead person, was in use long before the Greeks began arriving in Egypt. There are several examples of it in texts securely dated to the Third Intermediate Period, some of them as early as the twenty-first dynasty.[83] As we saw in section 4.10.4.3, it can even be found in the Coffin Texts. Thus it is not an innovation of the Graeco-Roman Period, and was not influenced in any way by Greek thought.

6.6.2. *Wsỉr n* NN and *Wsỉr* NN as indirect and direct genitival constructions respectively, both meaning 'Osiris of NN'

But this still leaves us with a problem. What is the difference between the locution *Wsỉr n* NN and its variant *Wsỉr* NN? Does the former, regardless of when it first came into use, reflect a different conception of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased than the latter? Hays, while acknowledging that the locution *Wsỉr n* NN is attested as early as the twenty-first dynasty, nevertheless maintains that it and *Wsỉr* NN mean two very different things. He follows the traditional view that in the latter the names of Osiris and the deceased are in apposition. According to him, *Wsỉr n* NN distanced the text owner from the performance of the text: 'There is an immediacy of identity predicated by the apposition of Osiris as a title versus the distance between the two parties in the idea of the Osiris of a person.'[84]

Hays thinks the insertion of an *n* in this locution reflects a 'cultural change' that took place roughly contemporaneously with the initial appearance of an *n* after the word *nswt*, 'king', in the *ḥtp dỉ nswt* offering formula.[85] As Franke has shown, the phrase *ḥtp dỉ nswt* X, where X is the name of a deity, originally meant 'a boon which the king and

[82] See references cited ibid., p. 330, to which add C. Römer, 'Das Werden zu Osiris im römischen Ägypten', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2 (2000), pp. 157–9; Kákosy in Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 18.5, pp. 3005–8. In support of this view, Kákosy (ibid., p. 3006) refers to a text, allegedly from the beginning of Book of the Dead Spell 125, which says that Anubis will change the bones and flesh of the deceased into the form of Osiris, but in fact the text in question says nothing of the kind. Nor is it part of the beginning of Spell 125, or any other Book of the Dead utterance. For the correct translation and identification of the text, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 438 and 444.

[83] Smith, *RdE* 63 (2012), pp. 187–92.

[84] H. Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1 (Leiden and Boston, 2012), pp. 167–8.

[85] Ibid., p. 167.

X give' (scil. to the deceased). In the nineteenth dynasty, however, an *n* was inserted between the names of the king and the deity, which could signify that the phrase was re-interpreted to mean 'a boon which the king gives to X'. If so, the king and the god are joint donors in the original version, whereas in the later one, the king presents the boon to the deity, who then passes it on to the deceased.[86] According to Hays, precisely the same thing happened with the locution *Wsir* NN.

This view can safely be rejected for two reasons. First, the *n* that begins to make its appearance in the offering formula in the nineteenth dynasty is the dative rather than the genitival *n*. Thus Hays is unjustified in conflating the two. More significantly, as already noted earlier in this section, the locution *Wsir n* NN is attested long before the beginning of the nineteenth dynasty. The earliest known example occurs in the Coffin Texts. For this reason it can hardly reflect a cultural change that is not supposed to have taken place until well into the New Kingdom.

Since our efforts to discover a difference between *Wsir n* NN and *Wsir* NN have met with no success, perhaps we should consider the possibility that there is none. I believe that this is actually the case, and that there is no difference in meaning between the two locutions. Rather they represent two alternative ways of expressing the same thing. Both have to be translated 'Osiris of NN'. One employs the indirect genitive, a possessive construction in which the Egyptian word corresponding to 'of' is actually written out. The other uses the direct genitive, in which it is omitted and the terms denoting the thing possessed and its possessor are simply juxtaposed.[87] At all times, therefore, the Egyptians referred to the deceased as 'Osiris of NN' when they wished to foreground their relationship to the god of the dead.

6.6.3. Evidence for *Wsir n* NN and *Wsir* NN as simple variants with the same meaning

What is the evidence for this point of view, which goes against an idea which has been held in Egyptology since the days of Champollion? Obviously, in researching this or any other problem, it is important to take into account what Egyptologists of past generations have thought, but it is even more important to take into account what the ancient Egyptians themselves thought. If the views of Egyptologists, past or present, are contradicted by those of the ancient Egyptians, it is the latter that we have to accept as valid. In my opinion, there is abundant proof that the ancient Egyptians saw *Wsir n* NN and *Wsir* NN as simple variants of each other, which meant precisely the same thing.

On the shabtis inscribed for the vizier Iken, who served under the twenty-second dynasty ruler Osorkon I, he is referred to as *Wsir n* NN as well as *Wsir* NN. On the lid of the coffin of a twenty-first dynasty priest called Menkheperre from the cache at Deir

[86] D. Franke, 'The Middle Kingdom Offering Formulas—A Challenge', *JEA* 89 (2003), pp. 39–57, especially p. 43.

[87] For these constructions, see A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*[3] (Oxford, 1957), pp. 65–6.

el-Bahri (MMA 25.3.7), he is called *Wsỉr n* NN, but on the left side of the coffin simply *Wsỉr* NN. On the back of a stela from Deir el-Bahri dating to the period between the twenty-second and twenty-fifth dynasties (MMA 22.3.33), a man and a woman are depicted. She is called *Wsỉr* NN, he *Wsỉr n* NN. In the label of a scene on the west face of a pyramidion of twenty-sixth dynasty date, now in Cairo (T.R. 15/3/25/6), the deceased is called *Wsỉr n* NN, while elsewhere on that object he is simply *Wsỉr* NN.[88] We also find variation between *Wsỉr n* NN and *Wsỉr* NN on different items of burial equipment belonging to the same person, a woman called Ankhesenmut who was interred in the reign of the twenty-first dynasty king Amenemope.[89]

The same sort of variation is attested in papyri. References to the deceased as *Wsỉr n* NN vary freely with references to them as *Wsỉr* NN within the same manuscript. Where multiple contemporary copies of the same text are extant, *Wsỉr n* NN is used in some copies and *Wsỉr* NN in others. In P. Rhind 1, where we have hieratic and demotic versions of the same text written one above the other by the same scribe, we find that *Wsỉr n* NN in the demotic version corresponds directly to *Wsỉr* NN in the hieratic. Furthermore, in a wide range of texts written over several centuries, in fact more than a millennium, the activities which *Wsỉr n* NN can be said to perform are precisely those performed by *Wsỉr* NN. The states of being that *Wsỉr n* NN can be said to experience are precisely those experienced by *Wsỉr* NN.[90]

All of this would be very strange if two different conceptions of the deceased's relationship with Osiris were involved. Are we really to imagine that those inscribing shabtis for a vizier would employ one conception of his relationship with that god on one shabti and a completely different one on another, and then revert to the first conception again on a third, or that different conceptions of this relationship would be used on different parts of the same coffin, or in the same scene on a stela, or on different items of burial equipment belonging to the same person?

Is it plausible that the writer of a text for the afterlife would switch back and forth between two different conceptions of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased from one passage to the next? Or that the way in which this relationship was envisaged varied from one manuscript to another of the same composition? Or that, having written a passage in hieratic, the scribe of P. Rhind 1 then wrote precisely the same passage in demotic, but employed an entirely different conception of the deceased's relationship with Osiris in the demotic text to the one he used in the hieratic? One demotic scribe wrote the same text for two different individuals, probably brothers, on two different mummy labels. He referred to one of them as *Wsỉr n* NN and the other as *Wsỉr* NN.[91] Is it likely that he envisaged the first as having a different sort of relationship with Osiris to the second?

[88] K. Jansen-Winkeln, *Inschriften der Spätzeit IV: Die 26. Dynastie* 2 (Wiesbaden, 2014), p. 997.

[89] For all the examples cited in this paragraph, see Smith, *RdE* 63 (2012), pp. 188–92.

[90] For the examples cited in this paragraph, see Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 332.

[91] S. Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2011), pp. 68–71 (nos. 378 and 379).

I think that the answer to all these questions must be no. For the Egyptians, *Wsi̯r n* NN and *Wsi̯r* NN were simply variants, between which scribes were free to alternate. For them the two meant the same thing. *Wsi̯r n* NN clearly means 'Osiris of NN'. So *Wsi̯r* NN must do so as well. How can this be? The only possible grammatical explanation is that proposed in section 6.6.2: both are genitival constructions, one direct and the other indirect. This explanation is the only one which can account for all the evidence. Moreover, unlike other explanations that have been proposed, it reflects what the ancient Egyptians actually thought about these forms, as revealed by the way in which they employed them in texts for the afterlife.

6.6.4. Defining the 'Osiris of' a deceased person

On the basis of the evidence presented in section 6.6.3, we conclude that texts for the afterlife in all periods of Egyptian history are addressed or refer to the 'Osiris of NN', whether this is expressed in writing as *Wsi̯r n* NN or simply *Wsi̯r* NN. But what exactly is the 'Osiris of' a deceased person? It is the form that an individual acquired as a result of the rites of mummification and justification. At the conclusion of these, having been restored to life and freed from imputation of wrongdoing, just as the god Osiris had been, they could be said to possess an Osiris-aspect. The performance of these rituals was sometimes described as 'giving an Osiris' to someone, which emphasizes the idea of the Osiris-aspect as something owned or possessed, hence the practice of designating it as the 'Osiris of NN'. The Osirian form was the outward mark of a person's status as a member of the community comprising the god's worshippers. Having acquired it, the deceased enjoyed not only the benefits of bodily rejuvenation, but also the fruits of a relationship with a specific deity which simultaneously situated them within a group.[92]

The 'Osiris', or Osirian form, of each person is unique, different to that of everyone else, just as each individual person is unique. Thus we could say that the initial element in the locution 'Osiris of NN' is not so much a name as it is a signifier of a particular class or category of things. As such, it is even capable of taking the definite article in texts written during periods when that article was in use. A good example occurs in a passage in the version of the Book of the Earth inscribed in the Saite Period tomb of Horiraa at Saqqara where he is referred to as *pꜣ Wsi̯r i̯my-r rwy.t Ḥr-i̯r-ꜥꜣ*, 'the Osiris of the overseer of the hall Horiraa'.[93] This passage provides further proof that no apposition is involved when *Wsi̯r* is prefixed to the name of the deceased. If this referred to the deity, it would not be determined by the definite article.

[92] See section 4.15.4; Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, pp. 333–6; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 6–7. For the form of a deity as an outward sign of a devotee's relationship with him or her, see also sections 4.9.1 and 4.14.4.

[93] J. Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth* (Atlanta, 2012), p. 437, line 4. He misreads the tomb owner's title as *ꜥrw.ty*, 'gatekeeper'.

6.6.5. Why do writings of 'Osiris of NN' as *Wsi̯r n* NN become more common when they do?

Before leaving this topic we should consider three further questions. The first is, why do writings of the locution 'Osiris of NN' with the word for 'of' actually written out become more common from the twenty-first dynasty onwards? Prior to that time, they are extremely rare. The answer is simple. The fact that texts from later periods of Egyptian history employ the form *Wsi̯r n* NN with greater frequency than those of earlier ones do reflects a well attested development within the Egyptian language itself: the progressive obsolescence of the direct genitive and its replacement in various compound constructions by the indirect genitive.[94] This did not result in the disappearance of direct genitival constructions like *Wsi̯r* NN, since fixed combinations of this type whose usage was consecrated by tradition continued to be employed. Rather it meant that they appeared alongside, or were used interchangeably with, their indirect counterparts.

Further evidence of this phenomenon is provided by the formula of filiation, NN *s*; NN, which from the thirteenth dynasty onwards signifies 'NN the son of NN'. At a certain point, we start to find examples of this formula written more fully as NN *s*; *n* NN, with a genitival adjective added after the word for 'son' but no change in meaning. This fuller form is then employed concurrently with the original one. It begins to proliferate at precisely the same time when examples of *Wsi̯r n* NN start to become more common. Some of the texts that employ the fuller version of the filiation formula are also texts in which the deceased are referred to as *Wsi̯r n* NN. We even have texts where NN *s*; *n* NN and *Wsi̯r n* NN occur together in the same sentence.[95] Thus, the greater frequency with which the latter occurs in texts of the twenty-first dynasty and later reflects not a new religious conception, but a broader phenomenon, a change in the Egyptian language itself, which took place over a clearly defined span of time. Accordingly, the scarcity of examples of *Wsi̯r n* NN in sources written prior to this should not be a matter for surprise.

6.6.6. 'Osiris of NN' in Greek?

The second question to consider is: can texts written in other languages tell us anything about how the locution 'Osiris of NN' was understood by the scribes who produced them? In the Graeco-Roman Period, as in earlier ones, texts for the afterlife were written almost exclusively in the traditional Egyptian scripts and languages. In rare instances, however, attempts were made to reproduce common formulas drawn from them in the Greek script. Some scribes limited themselves to transcription of an

[94] Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 333.
[95] See reference cited in the previous note.

Egyptian original into Greek characters. Thus the wish *ʿnḫ by=f m-bꜣḥ Wsỉr ḫnty ʾImnt nṯr ʿꜣ nb ʾbḏw*, 'May his ba live in the presence of Osiris foremost in the west, the great god and lord of Abydos', is transcribed as *Ανχη βιου ομμα Ουσορ χοντεμοντ νοντω νοβ ηβωτ* on two mummy labels now in the Louvre.[96] But other scribes actually attempted to translate Egyptian formulas into the Greek language. On a bilingual mummy label in Strasbourg, for instance, the words *r pꜣy=f by r šms Skr Wsỉr nṯr ʿꜣ*, 'His ba will serve Sokar-Osiris the great god', on the demotic side are rendered as *ἐξέσται σοὶ ὑπηρετεῖν τὸν μέγαν θεὼν* (so, for *θεὸν*) *Ὄσιριν*, 'You will be able to serve the great god Osiris', on the Greek side.[97]

This leads us to ask: is the locution *Wsỉr* NN ever translated into Greek? Since the Greek language employs distinct endings for nouns written in the nominative and genitive cases, including personal names, in theory it should be possible to establish whether the interpretation of the locution *Wsir* NN that I have proposed is correct or not by looking at a Greek translation of it to see which case ending is attached to the personal name constituting its second element. If the name is written in the nominative case, this would indicate that it was in apposition to the initial element *Wsỉr*. If it is in the genitive case, however, this would prove that *Wsỉr* NN was a direct genitival construction, as I have argued in sections 6.6.2–3.

Unfortunately, our Greek sources are less informative on this score than one would have hoped. Only rarely do they make use of the locution *Wsỉr* NN. Gaudard and Johnson have published a mummy label in Chicago (OIM 19387) in which the first element of that locution is written in demotic and the second element, the personal name, in Greek. Unfortunately, the ending of the latter has not been preserved, so we cannot say how it was declined.[98] The same authors cite another label found at Dendera and now in London (UCL 39587) where both elements of the locution are written in Greek.[99] Unlike the previous example discussed, this one is well preserved, but unfortunately the name of the individual for whom the label was inscribed, *Θερῆτις*, a variant form of *Τερῆτις* (= Egyptian *Ta-rṯ*), is indeclinable. A single form is employed for both nominative and genitive cases.[100] This is true of a number of names of Egyptian origin employed in Greek texts.[101] Thus the diagnostic value of this particular example for our purposes is nil. No other instance of the locution *Wsỉr* NN in a Greek text is known to me. As Vleeming has noted, however, the scribes who wrote

[96] Cf. J. Quaegebeur, 'Mummy Labels: An Orientation', in E. Boswinkel and P. Pestman (eds), *Textes grecs, démotiques et bilingues* (Leiden, 1978), pp. 254–5.

[97] Ibid., p. 252; Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, p. 424 (no. 795).

[98] See F. Gaudard and J. Johnson, 'Six Stone Mummy Labels in the Oriental Institute Museum', in H. Knuf, C. Leitz, and D. von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense: Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2010), pp. 207–9 and plates 60–1.

[99] Ibid., p. 208 note 72. Cf. Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 91–2 (no. 421).

[100] Ibid., p. 950.

[101] See examples cited ibid., pp. 946–64, with discussion on pp. 964–72.

Greek mummy labels frequently used the nominative case in error for the genitive when writing personal names.[102] Accordingly, even if we did have more Greek renderings of the locution *Wsir* NN, these would not necessarily inform us how that locution was understood by the scribes who wrote them.

6.6.7. Developments in the usage of the locution 'Osiris of NN' in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods

The third and final question for us to consider is: even if the basic meaning of the locution 'Osiris of NN' remained the same as it was before during the period now under consideration, did it undergo change or development in any other respects? The evidence at our disposal allows us to distinguish two such changes. The first of these involves the frequency and the scope of the locution's use, that is to say, the range of different contexts in which it could be employed. The second involves the number of other elements that could be combined with or added to the initial *Wsir.* We will consider each of these in turn.

6.6.7.1. Expansion of the range of contexts in which the locution is used

The earliest use of the locution 'Osiris of NN' was in the offering rite, where it served to denote the deceased as recipients of offerings presented in a ritual context. The locution specified that they would receive these under the auspices of Osiris. In the Old Kingdom, this applies to texts inscribed in private tombs as well as royal pyramids. But change and development are evident even in the Pyramid Texts which preserve the earliest occurrences of the locution. It is used in more areas of the pyramid of Teti than it is in that of Unis, and in more areas and a wider range of spell types (not just offering spells) in the pyramid of Pepi I than it is in either of those two monuments, reflecting an evolving and more complex form of association between the deceased and the deity than before.[103]

This process continues in the Coffin Texts. Although there too, the locution 'Osiris of NN' is employed in offering spells, it is already on its way to becoming simply a marker of a deceased person's status as a member of Osiris's following and beneficiary of his favours in the afterlife. The expansion of the range of contexts in which the deceased are called 'Osiris of NN' in the Coffin Texts parallels to some extent the expansion of the range of boons that Osiris is asked to grant them in the wishes in contemporary offering formulas. During the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom, more references to the deceased as 'Osiris of NN' occur in Coffin Text spells than in any other type of source. This is only to be expected, given the origin of the

[102] Ibid., p. 972. [103] See section 3.10.2.

locution as a device to signal the dead person's affiliation with Osiris in ritual contexts. Nevertheless, examples of it do occur outside the Coffin Text corpus, mainly in contexts involving offerings. The distribution of these is markedly similar to that noted for such examples in private sources of the Old Kingdom. The locution is rare on stelae of the Middle Kingdom. Where it does appear on such objects it is mainly in ritual utterances addressed to the deceased.[104]

Further developments take place in the New Kingdom. In Book of the Dead manuscripts of the eighteenth dynasty, for example, the locution 'Osiris of NN' appears only sporadically. In those of the nineteenth dynasty, by contrast, it is used with greater frequency.[105] Hays has noted that in the Book of the Dead, the locution is used in both spells intended to be recited by the deceased and in those recited for them by others, whereas originally its use was confined to the latter. He regards this as a New Kingdom innovation.[106] However, examples of the locution in spells recited by the dead for their own benefit are already attested in the Middle Kingdom. One occurs in a spell inscribed on the shrine of a thirteenth dynasty official named Iatu in the sanctuary of Heqaib at Elephantine. This resembles Coffin Text Spells 222 and 223 and is a precursor of the later Book of the Dead Spell 56. In it the shrine owner asks Atum to give him breath and proclaims 'I am the Osiris of the great one of the tens of Upper Egypt, Iatu.'[107]

By the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period, there are few, if any, restrictions on how and where the locution 'Osiris of NN' can be used. It has become a generic marker of the deceased's ritually conferred status as one of the god's adherents. Thus, unlike in the earliest periods of its employment, the locution is freely used in conjunction with such epithets as 'justified before Osiris' and to denote the deceased in *ḥtp dỉ nswt* offering formulas with Osiris as donor.[108] It can even be used in labels, divorced from any ritual context.[109] But this is not due to any innovation, Greek or otherwise. Rather, it is the end result of a gradual process extending over many centuries, one which began almost immediately after the locution was introduced. As the preceding paragraphs show, this started in the Old Kingdom and continued through every subsequent period of Egyptian history.

[104] See section 4.10.3.

[105] See Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, p. 167 note 641 and references cited there, in particular, I. Munro, *Untersuchungen zu den Totenbuch-Papyri der 18. Dynastie* (London, 1988), pp. 184 and 237–9; J. Quack, Review of I. Munro, *Das Totenbuch des Nachtamun aus der Ramessidenzeit (pBerlin P. 3002)*, in *BiOr* 57 (2000), pp. 57–9.

[106] Hays, *The Organization of the Pyramid Texts* 1, pp. 167 and 231.

[107] L. Habachi, *Elephantine IV: The Sanctuary of Heqaib* (Mainz am Rhein, 1985), p. 62 and plate 102.

[108] See, for instance, K. Jansen-Winkeln, *Inschriften der Spätzeit IV: Die 26. Dynastie* 1 (Wiesbaden, 2014), pp. 41, 43, 90–2, 125, 128, 158, 166, 170–1, 194, 212–14, and 216; Jansen-Winkeln, *Inschriften der Spätzeit IV: Die 26. Dynastie* 2, pp. 598, 667, 689, 707–9, and 714–15.

[109] e.g. Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, pp. 329–30; Smith, *RdE* 63 (2012), pp. 188–92; Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, p. xxxi (no. 280); J. Moje, 'Weitere demotische und bilingue Stelen aus Tell Nebesheh und aus Kom el-Hisn', *JEA* 97 (2011), pp. 179–81.

A group of short texts inscribed on papyri and coffins of the Roman Period express the wish that the deceased might serve Osiris and enjoy various other privileges in his company in the afterlife. The locution 'Osiris of NN' rarely occurs in these. Its use may have been considered unnecessary because the texts themselves place so much emphasis upon the dead person's entrance into the god's following and, from an Egyptian point of view, saying that the deceased served or followed Osiris and calling them 'Osiris of NN' amounted to virtually the same thing.[110] For similar reasons, in the Old Kingdom, the locution was not employed when the name of the deceased was preceded by the epithet '*imakh* before Osiris' or in offering formulas with Osiris as a donor. In these contexts, its use would have been superfluous, since the dead person's affiliation with the god was already signalled by other means.[111] The same is true in the Middle Kingdom, although we start to find exceptions where the deceased are called *Wsỉr* NN in offering formulas where Osiris is named as donor.[112] In subsequent periods such exceptions become even more common and the sort of etiquette that regulated the use of the locution in contexts like those just described is no longer observed so punctiliously.

Another group of short texts where the deceased's affiliation with Osiris is foregrounded is the corpus of mummy labels, the vast majority of which date to the Roman Period. Many of these begin with formulas stating that the *ba* of the deceased will serve Osiris or live in his presence, or that his name will endure before that god.[113] Here too, as one would expect, the locution 'Osiris of NN' is rarely used. Nevertheless, there are some exceptions where the deceased are designated in this way.[114] The vast majority of these occur in mummy labels which simply give the name and other biographical information about the deceased. Only rarely are they found in those that incorporate one of the formulas mentioned previously or associate the label owner with Osiris in some other manner. One such example is a label of the second century AD which requests that the *ba* of the deceased live and his bones be knit together for ever in the presence of Osiris-Sokar and Hathor, and refers to him as 'Osiris of NN'.[115] Another label of the first century AD mentions 'Osiris of NN who has gone to Osiris'.[116] The scarcity of examples of this type shows that even at a relatively late date, some scribes still deliberately avoided using the locution in contexts where it could be regarded as superfluous.

[110] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 560 note 15.
[111] See section 3.10.4. [112] See section 4.10.3.
[113] For the formulas used in mummy labels, see Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 792–802.
[114] See ibid., pp. 793 and 1004–5; C. Arlt, *Deine Seele möge leben für immer und ewig: Die demotischen Mumienschilder im British Museum* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2011), pp. 14–15; Gaudard and Johnson in Knuf, Leitz, and von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, p. 204; J. Moje, 'Demotica Varia III', *Göttinger Miszellen* 217 (2008), pp. 72–3.
[115] Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 173–4 (no. 508).
[116] Ibid., p. 67 (no. 374).

6.6.7.2. Addition of other elements to the locution

As we saw in sections 4.14.1 and 4.14.2, as early as the Middle Kingdom, the locution 'Osiris of NN' was sometimes expanded by the addition of other elements to the initial *Wsỉr*. Instead of being called simply *Wsỉr* NN, for instance, the deceased could be called *Skr Wsỉr* NN, 'Sokar-Osiris of NN', as a sign of their affiliation with that composite deity.[117] In the New Kingdom, specifically in the eighteenth dynasty, the form *Wsỉr ḫnty ʾImnty.w* NN, 'Osiris Khentiamentiu of NN', is attested for the first time.[118] While no examples of either of these expanded forms have been found in sources of the Ptolemaic Period to date, they do occur in those of the Roman Period, which shows that knowledge of them had not been lost.[119] The text on a mummy label, probably to be dated to the second century AD, identifies its owner as the 'Osiris-Sokar the great god and lord of Abydos of NN'.[120] Other mummy labels of the early Roman Period make reference to 'the *ba* of Osiris of NN' or 'the *ba* of Osiris Khentiamentiu of NN'.[121] One expands this to 'the *ba* of Osiris Khentiamentiu the great god and lord of Abydos of NN'.[122] These examples provide additional proof that the Osiris of an individual is not his corpse or mummy, as Spiegelberg and others have argued, since the corpse of a person could not be said to possess a *ba*.[123]

What may be additional examples of expansion of the locution 'Osiris of NN' occur in the texts inscribed on the anthropoid coffin of a man called Inaros where the name of the owner is preceded by *Wsỉr-Mn*, 'Osiris-Min'. The object, now in San Francisco, is unpublished. Brech, who has provided a brief description of it, dates it to the early Ptolemaic Period.[124] One could have here a locution 'Osiris-Min of NN'. The compound initial element could reflect a syncretism involving Osiris and Min.[125] Alternatively, it could

[117] See Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 200; Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 325.

[118] P. Dorman, *The Tombs of Senenmut: The Architecture and Decoration of Tombs 71 and 353* (New York, 1991), p. 139 and plate 85.

[119] Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 47–9, 85, and 724; Arlt, *Deine Seele möge leben für immer und ewig*, pp. 15 and 17.

[120] Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 159–60 (no. 491).

[121] Ibid., p. 793 with notes 6–7; Gaudard and Johnson in Knuf, Leitz, and von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, pp. 205–7; Arlt, *Deine Seele möge leben für immer und ewig*, pp. 14 and 16–17.

[122] Ibid., p. 16.

[123] See Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 329, and references cited there, to which add D. Kurth, *Materialien zum Totenglauben im römerzeitlichen Ägypten* (Hützel, 2010), p. 14; A. von Lieven, 'Das Verhältnis zwischen Tempel und Grab im griechisch-römischen Ägypten', *RdE* 61 (2010), p. 101.

[124] See R. Brech, *Spätägyptische Särge aus Achmim: Eine typologische und chronologische Studie* (Gladbeck, 2008), pp. 302–5 and 309.

[125] Cf. L. Baqué Manzano, 'Min-Osiris, Min-Horus: a propósito de un relieve del templo de Hibis en el oasis de El Jarga', in J. Cervelló Autuori and A. Quevedo Álvarez (eds), *…ir a buscar leña: Estudios dedicados al Prof. Jesús López* (Barcelona, 2001), pp. 35–49, also the syncretistic form Osiris-Min-Harsiesis cited in C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 2 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), p. 546. For what could be a reference to Osiris-Min in a demotic text inscribed on a mummy bandage, see Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, p. 569 (no. 967).

mark the coffin owner's dual cultic affiliation with both Osiris and Min, like the compound 'Osiris Hathor of NN' discussed in section 6.6.8.5. The coffin comes from Akhmim and its owner was a priest in the cults of both deities, so this is a distinct possibility.

In the text on a mummy label from Dendera which dates to the early Roman Period, the name of the deceased is preceded by both *Wsỉr-Mn*, 'Osiris-Min', and *Wsỉr-Ḥr*, 'Osiris-Horus', each compound occupying a line on its own.[126] Whether these are to be connected with the name that follows in the third line of the text is uncertain. If so, then this could be a further expansion along the same lines as *Wsỉr-Mn* on the coffin of Inaros. The name of the deceased is also preceded by *Wsỉr-Ḥr* in the inscription on a helmet of the Saite Period now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (MMA 41.2.9). This was found on the head of a mummy.[127]

In inscriptions on canopic vessels of the Third Intermediate and Saite Periods, the name of the deceased can be preceded by those of Osiris and one of the four children of Horus, e.g. *Wsỉr ỉmst/Ḥp/Dwꜣ-mw.t=f/Qbḥ-sn.w=f* NN.[128] It is not clear to me how such sequences should be divided, however. Are *Wsỉr ỉmst*, *Wsỉr Ḥp*, *Wsỉr Dwꜣ-mw.t=f*, and *Wsỉr Qbḥ-sn.w=f* in such cases compounds like the *Wsỉr-Mn* and *Wsỉr-Ḥr* discussed in the two preceding paragraphs? Or are the names of the children of Horus to be linked with that of the deceased which follows, marking their identity with him by virtue of the fact that they are not only organs of his body but constituents of his personality as well?[129] In this connection, it is worth noting that, on two canopic vessels found at the Ramesseum, the names of Amseti and Hapi in the combinations *Wsỉr* + *ỉmst* + name of female deceased and *Wsỉr* + *Ḥp* + name of female deceased are written with the seated woman determinative.[130] On the other hand, the texts on another set of canopic vessels found at the same site simply refer to *Wsỉr ỉmst*, *Wsỉr Ḥp*, *Wsỉr Dwꜣ-mw.t=f*, and *Wsỉr Qbḥ-sn.w=f*, without making any reference to the deceased,[131] so the problem of how to interpret such combinations may be more complex than it would first appear.

6.6.8. The locution 'Hathor of NN'

6.6.8.1. The date of the earliest examples of the locution

The initial element in the locution 'Osiris of NN' can also be replaced altogether. As we saw in section 4.14.4, deceased women are sometimes called *Ḥ.t-Ḥr* NN or *Ḥ.t-Ḥr n* NN,

[126] Ibid., p. 40 (no. 329).
[127] Jansen-Winkeln, *Inschriften der Spätzeit IV: Die 26. Dynastie* 2, p. 1171.
[128] Ibid., p. 810; J. Quibell, *The Ramesseum* (London, 1898), p. 17 and plate 19.
[129] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 309 note 36 and literature cited there. For texts on canopic vessels that explicitly identify the deceased with the children of Horus, see e.g. Jansen-Winkeln, *Inschriften der Spätzeit IV: Die 26. Dynastie* 2, pp. 855 and 873.
[130] Quibell, *The Ramesseum*, plate 19. The names of *Dwꜣ-mw.t=f* and *Qbḥ-sn.w=f* on the other two vessels belonging to this set do not have a determinative.
[131] Quibell, *The Ramesseum*, plate 19.

'Hathor of NN', rather than 'Osiris of NN'. Just as in the case of the latter, whether or not the genitival *n* was inserted was left to the predilection of the scribe. Since the first examples of this locution to come to scholarly attention were found in texts dating to the Graeco-Roman Period, it was initially assumed to be a development specific to that time as well. Some even claimed that its introduction was the result of Greek influence.[132] But this is now known not to be the case, since an example where a woman is designated as 'Hathor of NN' occurs in the text on a statue dating to the reign of Osorkon III of the twenty-third dynasty.[133] Thus the locution was in use long before the first Greeks arrived in Egypt.

6.6.8.2. The meaning of the locution

There are no known Greek transcriptions or translations of the locution 'Hathor of NN'. According to Chauveau, it was rendered in Greek with the adjective εὐμοιρία, 'well-endowed by fortune'. He bases this interpretation on a group of bilingual mummy labels in the Louvre where Greek εὐμοιρία NN corresponds to demotic *Ḥ.t-Ḥr* NN *mꜣʿ-ḫrw*, 'Hathor of NN, justified'.[134] However, εὐμοιρία in the texts on these mummy labels actually translates *mꜣʿ-ḫrw*, 'justified', not *Ḥ.t-Ḥr*. This is evident from labels where the former is present and the latter is not and the Greek text still inserts the adjective before the relevant personal name.[135] Thus there are clear examples where εὐμοιρία NN corresponds to NN *mꜣʿ-ḫrw*, but none where it corresponds to *Ḥ.t-Ḥr* NN.

The locution 'Hathor of NN' highlighted the status of women as devotees of Hathor in the afterlife.[136] It reflects a propensity for using gender as a basis for classification and association: males are identified as followers of a male deity and females as followers of a female deity. This practice had a long history in Egypt, and can be paralleled in numerous Egyptian sources of earlier date.[137] The idea that men might adhere to the cultic sphere of Osiris in the afterlife and women to that of Hathor is already attested in the inscription on a statue of a man and his wife dating to the eleventh dynasty, which describes him as being *imakh* before the god and her as enjoying that status before the goddess.[138] Even earlier than this, private offering

[132] See, for example, Quack in Berlejung and Janowski (eds), *Tod und Jenseits im alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt*, p. 616; Kákosy in Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 18.5, p. 3007; K. Parlasca, 'Bemerkungen zum ägyptischen Gräberwesen der griechisch-römischen Zeit', in *Ägypten: Dauer und Wandel* (Mainz am Rhein, 1985), pp. 97–103.

[133] Smith, *RdE* 63 (2012), pp. 194–5.

[134] See M. Chauveau and H. Cuvigny, 'Les étiquettes de momies de la collection Froehner', *CRIPEL* 9 (1987), pp. 79–80.

[135] M. Chauveau, *Les étiquettes de momies démotiques et bilingues du Musée du Louvre* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Paris III, 1987), pp. 133–4 (nos. 20–4 and 20–5).

[136] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 7; Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, pp. 334–5. For the deceased in the following of this goddess, see also section 4.14.4.

[137] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 8, and references cited there.

[138] W.M.F. Petrie, *Dendereh 1898* (London, 1900), p. 26 with plates 15 and 21; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 8.

formulas of the fifth and sixth dynasties describe deceased women as *imakh* before Hathor without any corresponding reference to a deceased male as *imakh* before Osiris.[139]

The 'Hathor' of a deceased woman was the Hathorian form that she acquired in the afterlife. Like the 'Osiris' of an individual, this was conferred by ritual means during the mummification ceremonies and constituted an outward sign, a visible mark, of her status as a follower or adherent of the goddess.[140] This is stated explicitly in the hieratic version of the text preserved in P. Rhind 2, where the beneficiary is told that, after her embalming and wrapping, she will appear at the fore, equipped with her panoply, in the form of Hathor mistress of the west.[141] In a later passage in the demotic version of that text, the goddess Isis asks various inhabitants of the underworld, including other deceased women who have acquired Hathorian forms, designated as 'Hathors', to let the beneficiary be together with them and join the female corporation that follows Isis and Nephthys.[142] This last passage is of interest, since it indicates that Hathor was not the only goddess whose retinue deceased women could join. The statement that they follow Isis and Nephthys here recalls the two female figures on a model funerary boat of the Middle Kingdom discussed in section 4.14.4. One of these is labelled *ỉst* NN *mỉʿ.(t)-ḫrw*, the other *Nb.t-ḥ.t* NN *mỉʿ.t-ḫrw*. As noted there, these may provide earlier evidence for deceased women as adherents of the goddesses in question.

6.6.8.3. Representations of the 'Hathor of' deceased women in Egyptian art?

What the Hathorian form of deceased women looked like, or rather how it was represented in Egyptian iconography, is uncertain. The passage from P. Rhind 2 cited in section 6.6.8.2 mentions a panoply (*ḫkr.w*) associated with it, but this is a rather vague term that can refer to ornaments, insignia, items of dress, or even equipment. According to Riggs, mummy cases like the one from Akhmim described in section 6.4.1 depict the deceased in the form of Hathor.[143] However, this view can safely be discounted since there is no evidence that the goddess was ever portrayed wearing the type of garment in which the owners of these objects are clothed.

Rondot thinks that some mummy portraits of the Roman Period depict deceased women in the form of Hathor. The portraits in question show them with a small crown

[139] W. Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel* (Glückstadt, 1968), pp. 19 and 32.

[140] For the form of a deity as an outward sign of a devotee's relationship with him or her, see also sections 4.9.1 and 4.14.4.

[141] P. Rhind 2, 4h/6–7. See G. Möller, *Die beiden Totenpapyrus Rhind des Museums zu Edinburg* (Leipzig, 1913), p. 58 and plate 15; Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, pp. 333–4.

[142] P. Rhind 2, 9d/3–7. See Möller, *Die beiden Totenpapyrus Rhind des Museums zu Edinburg*, p. 68 and plate 20; Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 335.

[143] Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 71–8.

comprising two horns and a sun disk surmounted by a pair of tall plumes.[144] Similar representations occur on shrouds.[145] Rondot identifies this crown as a distinctive attribute of Hathor.[146] He overlooks the fact that other goddesses wear it as well, however. These include Isis and Nephthys,[147] and although Rondot goes to rather elaborate lengths to deny that the horned crown could be a marker of association with the former, I think that this is actually a more plausible interpretation. Painted panels of the second century AD depict a goddess wearing a very similar crown in conjunction with Sarapis.[148] Given that Isis is regularly associated with that deity and Hathor is not, there can be little doubt that she is the goddess in question. Furthermore, the female deity portrayed on these panels is clothed in a garment like that worn by devotees of Isis.[149] A shared mode of dress is frequently used to signal the relationship between a deity and his or her followers,[150] so this is another reason for identifying the goddess shown on the panels as her. Since the crown depicted on the mummy portraits cited by Rondot is securely attested as an attribute of Isis, I see no reason why these should not depict their subjects as devotees of hers rather than Hathor. This example illustrates how unreliable identifications made solely on the basis of iconography can be.

6.6.8.4. Other ways of affiliating women with female deities in the afterlife?

Were there any other ways of affiliating female devotees with deities in earlier periods of Egyptian history? At first sight, it might appear that an alternative means of expressing such affiliation was employed in the tomb of the nineteenth dynasty ruler Tawosret in the Valley of the Kings (KV 14). Her position was somewhat anomalous since she was a woman who actually assumed the title of Pharaoh. In some scenes in the tomb of Tawosret, the epithet *nb*, 'lord', attributed to male divinities with whom she is shown interacting has been 'feminized' by the addition of a *t* ending.[151] It has been argued that the purpose of this was to indicate that the female ruler was identified with

[144] V. Rondot, 'L'empereur et le petit prince: Les deux colosses d'Argo, iconographie, symbolique et datation', in V. Rondot, F. Alpi, and F. Villeneuve (eds), *La Pioche et la plume. Autour du Soudan, du Liban et de la Jordanie: Hommages archéologiques à Patrice Lenoble* (Paris, 2011), pp. 428–31; Rondot, *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte*, pp. 256 and 355–6. For a similar view, see Hellinckx, *CdE* 85 (2010), p. 133.

[145] See K. Parlasca, 'A Painted Egyptian Mummy Shroud of the Roman Period', *Archaeology* 16 (1963), pp. 267–8; Parlasca, *Mumienporträts und verwandte Denkmäler*, pp. 161–2.

[146] For a similar view, see Hellinckx, *CdE* 85 (2010), p. 133.

[147] See, for example, Venit in Robinson and Wilson (eds), *Alexandria and the North-Western Delta*, p. 254, figure 21.17; Kaplan, *Grabmalerei und Grabreliefs der Römerzeit*, plate 46.

[148] Rondot, *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte*, p. 355.

[149] Ibid., p. 356. For the garment in question, see J. Eingartner, *Isis und ihre Dienerinnen in der Kunst der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen, and Cologne, 1991); E. Walters, *Attic Grave Reliefs That Represent Women in the Dress of Isis* (Princeton, 1988).

[150] Rondot, *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte*, p. 275.

[151] See A. Forgeau, *Horus-fils-d'Isis: La jeunesse d'un dieu* (Cairo, 2010), p. 286 note 119.

the gods in question.[152] This is unlikely, in my view, since, it is only the epithet 'lord' and never the actual names of the deities themselves to which the feminine ending is added, and even this is not done consistently.[153]

But could this have been a way of 'feminizing' the gods in question so as to align their gender with that of the deceased Tawosret? This hypothesis has to be rejected as well, since the writing of *nb*, 'lord', as *nb.t* is also attested in an epithet attributed to Amun-Re, *nb.t šw.ty wr.ty*, 'lord of the two great plumes', in the tomb of Ramesses VI.[154] Since the king was male himself, there would have been no need to alter the god's gender to harmonize with his, so there must be another explanation. The most likely one is that proposed by Vittmann, who notes that the writing of *nb* as *nb.t*, common in texts of the Late Period, is already well attested in the New Kingdom when Tawosret's tomb was decorated.[155] Thus it is a purely graphic phenomenon and has no wider religious significance.

6.6.8.5. The locution 'Hathor of NN' in combination with 'Osiris of NN'

The introduction of the locution 'Hathor of NN' did not mean that women ceased to be designated as 'Osiris of NN'. Like men, they could still be called this until belief in the Osirian afterlife came to an end. Rather, the two locutions were employed concurrently. A few texts refer to their female beneficiaries as 'Osiris of NN' in some passages and 'Hathor of NN' in others.[156] Similarly, on a stela of the Roman Period now in the British Museum (BM EA 8486), the female owner is called 'Hathor of NN' in the label in the lunette and 'Osiris of NN' in the text of the offering formula below.[157] Since these locutions identified the deceased as members of a particular deity's following, and they could be affiliated with more than one divinity,[158] the two statuses were not mutually exclusive. Deceased women could also be referred to with a compound designation, 'Osiris Hathor of NN', attested from the Ptolemaic Period onward.[159] In the Roman Period, this was expanded further into 'Sokar-Osiris Hathor of NN'.[160] Such

[152] E. Hornung, *The Valley of the Kings: Horizon of Eternity* (New York, 1990), p. 57; H. McCarthy, 'Rules of Decorum and Gender Fluidity in Tawosret's Tomb', in C. Graves-Brown (ed.), *Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt: 'Don Your Wig for a Joyful Hour'* (Swansea, 2008), pp. 84 and 102–3.

[153] Forgeau, *Horus-fils-d'Isis: La jeunesse d'un dieu* (Cairo, 2010), p. 286 note 119, draws attention to an instance in which the god Geb is called *nb s:ṯw nb.t* (*sic*) *p.t nb dw:.t*, 'lord of the earth, lord of the sky, lord of the underworld'. Here *nb* and *nb.t* seem to be used interchangeably.

[154] See A. Piankoff, *The Tomb of Ramesses VI* (New York, 1954), plate 139; U. Rössler-Köhler, 'Einige Beobachtungen an Dekorationsteilen der Königsgräber des NR', *BiOr* 43 (1986), p. 284 note 12.

[155] G. Vittmann, 'Zwei mißverstandene Schreibungen', *Göttinger Miszellen* 83 (1984), p. 77.

[156] Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, pp. 13 and 200.

[157] M. Bierbrier, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae* 11 (London, 1987), p. 45 and plates 94–5.

[158] Compare the Coffin Text spells cited in section 4.14.4 where the deceased seeks admission to the followings of Re and Hathor. Cf. Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 335.

[159] Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507*, p. 130; Brech, *Spätägyptische Särge aus Achmim*, p. 378.

[160] Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 200.

compound designations do not imply that there was a syncretism involving Osiris and Hathor. Rather, they are a concise means of marking the deceased's cultic affiliation with both deities.[161] How a woman was designated in a particular text or text passage depended upon which of her affiliations the writer wished to foreground.

Even this is not new, however, since antecedents can be identified in much earlier periods of Egyptian history. A vertical column of text on the right side of a false door of the late Old Kingdom belonging to a woman called *Sỉ.t-ỉy-ṯnw*, now in Cairo, identifies her as *imakh* before Hathor.[162] In the inscription above the scene in the central panel, however, she is called *Wsỉr Sỉ.t-ỉy-ṯnw ḥss.t Ḥ.t-Ḥr*, 'Osiris of *Sỉ.t-ỉy-ṯnw*, praised by Hathor', thus marking her affiliation with both deities in conjunction.[163] As noted in section 4.14.4, this is precisely the same information that the later locution 'Osiris Hathor of NN' conveys, and it is tempting to see this designation of the owner of the false door as the precursor of that locution.

6.6.9. Summary of evidence relating to designations of the deceased

The evidence shows that the practice of designating the deceased as *Wsỉr n* NN rather than *Wsỉr* NN was not an innovation of the Ptolemaic Period. It is actually attested much earlier. In fact, both *Wsỉr n* NN and *Wsỉr* NN are simply variant forms of the same locution: 'Osiris of NN'. This locution underwent various developments over time, including expansion and even replacement by other locutions in certain contexts. However, none of these constitutes evidence of a change in the Egyptian conception of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased in the Ptolemaic Period. Both expansion and substitution of the original locution by others were already happening before that time. As we have seen, some variants of it found in texts of the Ptolemaic Period that have been identified as innovations are actually attested much earlier. Others are simply new ways of expressing older ideas or concepts. Even where fresh developments can be discerned, these are not due to a sudden break. Rather they are part of a longer process of evolution which began centuries before. Nor did this stop when the rule of the Ptolemies came to an end. The locution 'Osiris of NN' underwent further development in the Roman Period as well, although once again without losing its basic meaning. All such developments were part of a single continuum, which was unaffected by changes in rulers.

The examples we have examined in sections 6.6.1–8 illustrate the pitfalls awaiting the investigator who seeks to trace changes in Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife in the Graeco-Roman Period without due regard for all the evidence. They show that one cannot study the evidence of that phase of Egyptian history in isolation. It has to be

[161] For the concept of dual cultic affiliation, see section 5.10.1.

[162] H. Fischer, 'A Stela of the Herakleopolitan Period at Saqqara: The Osiris *Iti*', *ZÄS* 90 (1963), p. 37 and plate 6.

[163] Ibid., p. 36 and plate 6.

viewed in conjunction with that of earlier periods as well. Otherwise, one might overlook important connections between the two, or precedents for what appear to be new ideas in sources of much greater antiquity. This leaves us with one further thing to consider: the rise to prominence of Sarapis at the beginning of the Ptolemaic dynasty, and his identification with Osiris. Did this influence Egyptian perceptions of the relationship between that god and the deceased? We will investigate the relevant evidence in the remaining sections of this chapter.

6.7. THE ORIGIN OF SARAPIS AND HIS NAME

6.7.1. Was Sarapis an indigenous or a foreign deity?

A tradition preserved in classical authors like Tacitus and Plutarch records that the cult of the god Sarapis originated in the Greek city of Sinope on the south coast of the Black Sea. It spread to Egypt when the god's statue was brought there at the instigation of Ptolemy I (305–282 BC).[164] Other writers present conflicting accounts, however. Clement of Alexandria says that the statue of Sarapis was sent to Ptolemy II by the inhabitants of Sinope to thank him for helping them during a famine.[165] Both Tacitus and Clement record a variant tradition, according to which Ptolemy III brought the statue to Egypt from Seleucia in Syria.[166] Some authors state that Alexander had already established a temple for Sarapis prior to the inception of the Ptolemaic dynasty.[167] Others trace the origin of the god's cult back even further, to the reign of a mythical king, either Greek or Egyptian.[168] Without exception, however, these authors were writing centuries after the events which they purport to describe.

The earliest contemporary reference to Sarapis by name occurs in a papyrus fragment of a play of Menander found at Oxyrhynchus, one line of which reads 'How holy is the god Sarapis.' Since Menander died somewhere between 293 and 290 BC, the deity's cult must already have been in existence before then.[169] A dedication to Sarapis and Isis found at Halicarnassus on the west coast of Turkey has been dated to

[164] See J. Quack and B. Paarmann, 'Sarapis: Ein Gott zwischen griechischer und ägyptischer Religion', in N. Zenzen, T. Hölscher, B. Paarmann, and K. Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung: Wechselnde Perspektiven auf die Antithese von 'Ost' und 'West' in der griechischen Antike* (Heidelberg, 2013), pp. 261–9; P. Borgeaud and Y. Volokhine, 'La formation de la légende de Sarapis: Une approche transculturelle', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2 (2000), pp. 38–42.

[165] Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 262.

[166] Ibid., p. 269.

[167] Ibid., p. 272; J. Stambaugh, *Sarapis Under the Early Ptolemies* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 10–11.

[168] Ibid., pp. 68–74; Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 270.

[169] Ibid., p. 263; Stambaugh, *Sarapis Under the Early Ptolemies*, p. 10; Borgeaud and Volokhine, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2 (2000), pp. 53–4 note 71.

the early third century BC.[170] Another early reference to Sarapis occurs in a text discovered at Gorgan (Hyrcania) on the southeast coast of the Caspian Sea. This records the manumission of a slave in the local temple of that god in the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus I (281–261 BC).[171] Within Egypt itself, the earliest evidence for a cult of Sarapis is provided by three Greek dedications to him, either alone or in conjunction with Isis, dating to the reign of Ptolemy I or shortly after. All three of these were found at Alexandria or nearby.[172] The fact that Sarapis is unattested in Egypt prior to this time would appear to corroborate those ancient accounts that credit Ptolemy I, or perhaps his successor Ptolemy II, with introducing the god's cult to that land.

It is noteworthy, however, that a few ancient authors attribute an Egyptian origin to Sarapis rather than a foreign one. Clement, for instance, quotes an earlier account by the third-century BC writer Nymphodorus of Amphipolis, according to which the name of Sarapis derived from an Egyptian expression meaning 'coffin of Apis', thus connecting him with the divine bull Apis that was worshipped in Memphis.[173] Likewise, Cyril of Alexandria, writing in the fourth century AD, claimed that the name Sarapis was a conflation of those of Osiris and Apis.[174]

This view is shared by some modern writers. Paarmann, for example, maintains that Sarapis was not a foreign deity at all but originated in Memphis among the descendants of Ionian and Carian mercenaries who had already been living there for centuries when the first soldiers of Alexander arrived in Egypt. Like Cyril, he derives the name of their god from the Egyptian *Wsi̯r-Ḥp*, a locution used to denote the deceased Apis bull in which the name of the animal, *Ḥp*, was preceded by *Wsi̯r*, 'Osiris'.[175] According to him, the Ptolemies did not import a new cult from abroad. Rather they adopted an already-

[170] P. Fraser, 'Two Studies on the Cult of Sarapis in the Hellenistic World', *Opuscula Atheniensia* 3 (1960), p. 34 note 1; Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 270. Cf. M. Bommas, *Heiligtum und Mysterium: Griechenland und seine ägyptischen Gottheiten* (Mainz am Rhein, 2005), p. 34.

[171] W. Clarysse and M. Paganini, 'Theophoric Personal Names in Graeco-Roman Egypt: The Case of Sarapis', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 55 (2009), p. 69 note 6; Borgeaud and Volokhine, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2 (2000), p. 59 note 94.

[172] See Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 219 note 31; É. Bernand, *Inscriptions grecques d'Alexandrie ptolémaïque* (Cairo, 2001), pp. 17–20 and 27–8; Borgeaud and Volokhine, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2 (2000), p. 58 note 92. The last refer to a fourth Greek dedication from the Fayum which has been dated to the late fourth century BC by some; however, others assign it to the third century. See C. La'da, *Foreign Ethnics in Hellenistic Egypt* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), p. 80 (E640).

[173] Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 271.

[174] Ibid., p. 272.

[175] For veneration of Egyptian deities like Osiris and the Apis bull among these and other groups of foreigners living in Egypt, see Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden im ersten vorchristlichen Jahrtausend*, pp. 106–11, 170–4, 185, 220, 228–9, 232, and 236–7; P. Gallo and O. Masson, 'Une stèle "hellénomemphite" de l'ex-collection Nahman', *BIFAO* 93 (1993), pp. 265–76; Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, pp. 234 and 236–7.

existing Memphite cult, established it in the new capital Alexandria, and enhanced its prestige by extending royal patronage to it.[176]

In my opinion, there are some problems with this view. One is that it is difficult to reconcile the idea of an Egyptian, specifically Memphite, origin for Sarapis with the geographical distribution of the earliest evidence for the god. Within Egypt itself, most of this comes from Alexandria. None actually comes from Memphis. Moreover, a significant proportion of the earliest evidence for Sarapis has been found at sites outside Egypt, some of them a considerable distance away from that country. None of it makes any reference to the Ptolemies. If Sarapis was an indigenous deity whose cult was spread abroad by those kings, then why is this so? One should probably not make too much of the distribution of the evidence, given that the amount of it is relatively small, but this should caution us against undue haste in reaching conclusions about the god's place of origin.

Also problematic, in my view, is Paarmann's derivation of the name of Sarapis from the locution used to denote the deceased Apis bull. The etymology of this god's name has been much debated. Quack has rightly dismissed attempts to trace its origin to Mesopotamian or Persian titles like šar-apsī and *šahrbed*. Equally implausible, as he notes, are etymologies deriving the name from hypothetical Egyptian phrases that combine the verb *sr*, 'foretell', or the noun *sr*, 'magistrate', with that of Apis.[177] Quack cites numerous examples which demonstrate conclusively that Greek Sarapis was used as the equivalent of the Egyptian divine name *Wsỉr-Ḥp*, 'Osiris-Apis', in bilingual texts.[178] But does this mean that the former is derived from the latter, and does the name Osiris-Apis actually denote the deceased Apis bull in these texts as Paarmann and others have assumed?

Quack has shown that there are no obstacles to deriving Greek Sarapis from Egyptian *Wsỉr-Ḥp* from a phonetic point of view.[179] Thus one could certainly be the origin of the other. But if the name of the deity and his cult were imported from abroad, as some of the evidence appears to suggest, then the likelihood is that the name is not Egyptian at all. If this is the case, the phonetic similarity of Sarapis to Osiris-Apis is fortuitous and the two names are unrelated etymologically. The resemblance between the names may have been a factor in the decision to equate the two deities who bore them,[180] but as we will see in the ensuing sections of this chapter, other factors were involved as well.

6.7.2. Sarapis, Osiris-Apis, and the deceased Apis bull

The locution used to denote the deceased Apis bull at Memphis is composed of two elements, *Wsỉr* and *Ḥp*.[181] But there was another form of the god Osiris that was

[176] Ibid., pp. 275–7.
[177] Ibid., pp. 229–31.
[178] Ibid., pp. 232–3.
[179] Ibid., pp. 231–2.
[180] Cf. Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, pp. 224–5.
[181] On the various ways of designating the Apis bull, see D. Devauchelle, 'Osiris, Apis, Sarapis et les autres: Remarques sur les Osiris memphites au Ier millénaire av. J.-C.', in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 51–5.

venerated at Memphis whose name was composed of the same two elements, the syncretistic deity Osiris-Apis. He was the chief god of the Memphite necropolis, in particular that part of it known as the Domain of Osiris-Apis (*Pr-Wsỉr-Ḥp*). This was a large area that encompassed the catacombs where the Apis bulls were buried, but much else besides, including a number of other cemeteries for sacred animals and birds as well as temples.[182] It is easy to confuse the name of this deity with the locution used to designate the deceased Apis bull, since the two are written identically in many Egyptian sources. As Devauchelle has demonstrated, however, they are distinct, and it is important to keep them separate.[183]

How can we distinguish them then? Devauchelle has enumerated the most significant distinctions between the two. One is in the way that they are represented. The syncretistic deity Osiris-Apis is normally depicted in a form like that of Osiris himself rather than as a bull.[184] In the lunette of Stela Cairo CG 31147, for instance, he sits enthroned flanked by Isis and Nephthys, wearing the *atef*-crown and holding the crook and flail. The demotic texts above and below identify him as 'Osiris-Apis the great god'.[185] Another difference lies in the nature of the relationships that the two deities have with Isis. Osiris-Apis is the spouse of that goddess, while the Apis bull is her son.[186] Thus the cows that bore the bulls could be called Isis after their deaths.[187] Near the catacombs where the mothers of the Apis bulls were buried, the thirtieth dynasty ruler Nectanebo II erected a temple dedicated to Osiris-Apis and Isis the mother of Apis.[188] A third difference is that the syncretistic deity Osiris-Apis is attested in texts from a range of places throughout Egypt, while the locution used to denote the deceased form of the Apis bull is mainly local. Thus it is unusual to find examples of it outside the Memphite region.[189]

[182] On the extent of this district, see references cited ibid., p. 50 note 5; Borgeaud and Volokhine, *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 2 (2000), pp. 71–2.

[183] Devauchelle in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 54–5 and 60–2; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, pp. 213–25.

[184] For the iconography of this god, see Devauchelle in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 54–5.

[185] Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 214 note 5; W. Spiegelberg, *CGC: Die demotischen Inschriften* (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 58–9 and plate 17; S. Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes and Other Short Texts in the Demotic Script Found on Various Objects and Gathered from Many Publications* (Leuven, Paris, and Sterling, 2001), pp. 213–14 and 270. According to Vleeming, the date of this object is probably pre-Ptolemaic.

[186] Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 219.

[187] H.S. Smith, 'Dates of the Obsequies of the Mothers of Apis', *RdE* 24 (1972), p. 177.

[188] Devauchelle in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, p. 54.

[189] Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, pp. 220–2. For a reference to the cult of the deceased Apis bull at Thebes, see C. Traunecker, 'Les graffiti des frères Horsaisis et Horemheb: Une famille de prêtres sous les derniers Ptolémées', in W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, and H. Willems (eds), *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years. Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur* 2 (Leuven, 1998), pp. 1224–5; L. Coulon, 'Les sièges de prêtre d'époque tardive: À propos de trois documents thébains', *RdE* 57 (2006), pp. 15 and 23.

It was Osiris-Apis with whom Sarapis was identified, not the deceased form of the Apis bull. This is evident from the fact that when Sarapis is mentioned in conjunction with Isis, the two deities are treated as a divine couple, not as mother and son. Further proof that Sarapis and the bull were distinct is provided by a Greek text of the second century BC from Chalcis that treats them as separate deities.[190] The situation may have changed somewhat in the Roman Period, when a bull who might be Apis is occasionally associated with Sarapis, but there is no evidence for such an association during the period that we are considering now.[191]

6.7.3. Motives for Ptolemaic sponsorship of the cult of Sarapis

Whatever the origin of Sarapis and his cult, there is no doubt that the prestige of both increased enormously as a result of the patronage extended to them by the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt.[192] The motive for their elevation of Sarapis to the position of state deity has been much debated.[193] One theory is that his cult was intended to unify the Egyptian and Greek elements of the population of the newly established Ptolemaic kingdom by providing a common focus of worship for both groups. Other theories are that Sarapis was supposed to bring Greek settlers of diverse backgrounds together upon their arrival in Egypt, or help to integrate recent immigrants with Greeks who had already been living in that country for a long time. One view maintains that the Ptolemies promoted the cult of Sarapis for purposes of international propaganda rather than to encourage domestic unity. Some even think that their decision to promote his cult may have been in response to a demand from their subjects. Since no trustworthy contemporary source informs us about their motives, the field is left open to speculation.

[190] See Stambaugh, *Sarapis Under the Early Ptolemies*, p. 66. He also cites a graffito that supposedly identifies the writer as a servant of Sarapis and Apis, thus distinguishing the two gods, but the reading of the name of the bull there is incorrect. See G. Nachtergael, 'Graffites du Sarapieion de Memphis', *CdE* 74 (1999), pp. 350–1.

[191] Stambaugh, *Sarapis Under the Early Ptolemies*, pp. 62–3; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 223; Devauchelle in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, p. 61.

[192] For Ptolemaic sponsorship of the cult of Sarapis, in particular for the link between it and the ruler cult established by Ptolemy II, see S. Pfeiffer, 'The God Serapis, his Cult and the Beginnings of the Ruler Cult in Ptolemaic Egypt', in P. McKechnie and P. Guillaume (eds), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World* (Leiden and Boston, 2008), pp. 387–408; B. Legras, 'Sarapis, Isis et le pouvoir lagide', in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis*, pp. 95–115.

[193] For surveys of ideas on this subject, see Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, pp. 257–60; L. Bricault and M. Versluys, 'Isis and Empires', in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis*, pp. 8–9.

6.8. EVIDENCE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF SARAPIS WITH OSIRIS-APIS

6.8.1. Correspondence between Greek Sarapis and Egyptian Osiris-Apis in bilingual texts

The earliest bilingual texts in which Greek Sarapis corresponds to Egyptian Osiris-Apis date to the reign of Ptolemy III. A series of twenty plaques made of gold, silver, or other materials records the fact that he built the temple and sacred enclosure of the Serapeum in Alexandria. Ten of these were discovered in a foundation deposit in the southeast angle of the older part of the Serapeum and ten in the southwest angle.[194] All are inscribed with the same pair of texts, one in Greek, the other in hieroglyphs. The Greek text says 'King Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the sibling gods, (built) for Sarapis the temple and the enclosure.'[195] The hieroglyphic text says 'The King of Upper and Lower Egypt, heir of the sibling gods, chosen of Amun, Sekhemankhre, the son of Re, Ptolemy, living forever, beloved of Ptah, made the domain and the temple for Osiris-Apis.'[196]

Four similar bilingual plaques made of gold, silver, or other materials, dating to the reign of Ptolemy IV, were discovered in a cavity under one of the cornerstones of a Ptolemaic building unearthed during the reconstruction of the old Bourse in Alexandria. Only one of these, the plaque made of gold, still survives. The Greek inscription on it says '(The temple dedicated) to Sarapis and Isis, the saviour gods, and King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoe, the father-loving gods'. The hieroglyphic parallel text reads 'It belongs to Osiris-Apis and Isis, the saviour gods, and the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Ptolemy, living for ever, beloved of Isis, and Queen Arsinoe, the father-loving gods.'[197] Here too Greek Sarapis corresponds to Egyptian Osiris-Apis.

Examples of this sort have been found elsewhere in Egypt in addition to Alexandria. P. Lille 96 is a demotic deed of surety from the Fayum dating to 225 BC. The guarantor has the Egyptian title 'shrine-opener of Osiris-Apis'.[198] This corresponds to 'temple warden (*νακόρος*) of Sarapis' in the Greek abstract on the back of the deed.[199] The guarantor has a Greek name, as does his father, but the person for whom he promises to provide surety is an Egyptian. Since the Greek text is simply a summary of the longer

[194] See A. Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple and Enclosure of Serapis at Alexandria* (Cairo, 1946), pp. 1–7, plates 1–2 and 10; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 220 note 36, with additional bibliography.

[195] Rowe, *Discovery of the Famous Temple and Enclosure of Serapis at Alexandria*, pp. 8 and 10.

[196] Ibid., pp. 8–9.

[197] Ibid., pp. 12–13; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 220 note 37, with additional bibliography.

[198] F. de Cenival, *Cautionnements démotiques du début de l'époque ptolémaïque* (Paris, 1973), pp. 118–19 and plate 20.

[199] H. Cadell, *Papyrus de la Sorbonne (P. Sorb. I)* (Paris, 1966), pp. 111–12. Cf. G. Vittmann, 'Beobachtungen und Überlegungen zu Fremden und hellenisierten Ägyptern im Dienste einheimischer Kulte', in Clarysse, Schoors, and Willems (eds), *Egyptian Religion* 2, p. 1233.

demotic one, we can assume that in this instance Greek 'Sarapis' is a translation of demotic 'Osiris-Apis', rather than the reverse. Thus this example reveals more about the Greek scribe's perception of the deity than it does about that of the scribe responsible for the demotic.

6.8.2. Egyptian texts where the divine name Osiris-Apis is used to refer to Sarapis

The identification of Sarapis with Osiris-Apis was more current among Greeks than among Egyptians. Nevertheless, there are clear examples where Egyptian texts use the divine name Osiris-Apis to refer to Sarapis, In Ptolemaic Egypt, as in earlier periods of Egyptian history, it was customary to swear oaths by the ruler.[200] Specimens of such oaths are attested in Greek and demotic documents from a range of Egyptian sites, including Elephantine, Thebes, Herakleopolis, Hawara, and Tebtunis. The earliest of these date to the reign of Ptolemy II and only invoke members of the ruling family. From the reign of Ptolemy III onward, however, they invoke various deities as well. In the extant demotic royal oaths, the deities in question are either 'Isis and Osiris and all the gods of Egypt' or 'Isis and Osiris-Apis and all the gods of Egypt'. The version of the oath that mentions Osiris pre-dates the one that mentions Osiris-Apis, and appears to have been superseded by it. In the Greek royal oaths, Sarapis is the only male deity mentioned by name. In these texts, therefore, he functions as the equivalent of both Osiris and Osiris-Apis. As Quack has noted, when demotic oaths invoke the latter, they are actually invoking the state god Sarapis.[201]

There are other demotic texts where we can be confident that Osiris-Apis is being used to refer to Sarapis, even if we have no Greek parallels to prove it. Two demotic ostraca in the archive of a Memphite priest called Hor, who lived during the reign of Ptolemy VI, refer to a place in Alexandria called 'the domain of Osiris-Apis the great which is in Alexandria', where the writer says he met the rulers.[202] There can be no doubt that the place in question is the Alexandrian Serapeum. A number of demotic papyri setting out the regulations of priestly associations have been preserved.[203] Most of these come from the Fayum and date to the late third or the second century BC. Among the duties which the members of these associations promise to perform is that of providing burnt offerings and libations for the king, queen, and various deities. In one exemplar, P. Cairo 31178, these are identified as 'Osiris and Isis the great and

[200] For these oaths, see Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, pp. 240–2.

[201] Ibid., p. 241.

[202] See J. Ray, *The Archive of Hor* (London, 1976), plates 3–4 (Text 2, recto, line 12, and verso, line 5; Text 3, verso, lines 19–20).

[203] See F. de Cenival, *Les associations religieuses en Égypte d'après les documents démotiques* (Cairo, 1972); Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, pp. 242–3.

Osiris-Apis and [all the gods of] Egypt'.[204] The text in question comes from Tebtunis and dates to 179 BC. Noteworthy is the fact that it treats Osiris and Osiris-Apis as two distinct gods. Here too, we are justified in seeing the latter's name as an alternative for that of Sarapis. The same is true in P. Cairo 30619, also from Tebtunis and dating to 137 BC, where the deities for whom the priests undertake to provide offerings and libations include 'Isis and Osiris-Apis and all the gods of Egypt'.[205]

Quack has noted the similarities between the lists of deities in documents of this type and those in the royal oaths.[206] As he points out, when Egyptian scribes used the name Osiris-Apis to refer to Sarapis, it was generally in 'official' contexts where the king and queen figured prominently, and some expression of loyalty to them was required. Sarapis and Isis were seen as divine counterparts of the reigning royal couple, so it was appropriate to mention them in contexts of this nature as well.[207] This also explains the references to Sarapis as Osiris-Apis in the Archive of Hor. The demotic ostraca in this archive formed the basis of a petition that was intended to be submitted to Ptolemy VI, so it is not surprising that Hor makes reference to the state god when addressing the king and trying to persuade him to support his cause.

In some cases where an Egyptian text mentions Osiris-Apis, it is possible that Sarapis is meant but we cannot be certain. A good example is provided by the demotic inscription on the back pillar of a statue dating to the first half of the second century BC. This is said to have been discovered on the island of Rhodes and is now in the Louvre (AF 10853).[208] The text reads 'Before Osiris-Apis the great god and Isis the great goddess. Dionysios the man of Iasos.' The head and feet of the statue in question are missing, but it appears to have portrayed an Egyptian king wearing a kilt. The object is puzzling for a number of reasons. How did the dedicator, a native of a city in Caria, obtain possession of the statue, who carved the demotic inscription on the back pillar for him, and how and why was the statue transported to Rhodes? We are not in a position to answer any of these questions, but given the find spot of the object and the ethnicity of its donor, it is at least plausible that the god named in its dedicatory inscription is really Sarapis rather than Osiris-Apis, since the former had a higher international profile than the latter.

[204] De Cenival, *Les associations religieuses en Égypte d'après les documents démotiques*, p. 40 and plate 3 (P. Cairo 31178, lines 4–5). The restoration of the words 'all the gods of' is certain, based on parallels in other documents of the same type.

[205] Ibid., p. 94 and plate 7 (P. Cairo 30619, line 4). For offerings presented to Sarapis in Egyptian temples, see also F. Saragoza, 'La "maison à double-carré" de Médamoud et les sanctuaires isiaques d'Égypte', *BIFAO* 112 (2012), pp. 349–70, especially pp. 363–4.

[206] Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 243.

[207] Ibid., pp. 243 and 245–6; Stambaugh, *Sarapis Under the Early Ptolemies*, pp. 32–3; Pfeiffer in McKechnie and Guillaume (eds), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*, p. 396.

[208] W. Spiegelberg, 'Die demotische Inschrift auf der Statue von Rhodos', *ZÄS* 50 (1912), pp. 24–7; Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes and Other Short Texts in the Demotic Script Found on Various Objects and Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 73–4 and plate 4; Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 244; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 221.

6.9. EVIDENCE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF SARAPIS WITH OSIRIS IN THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD

As we saw in the case of the royal oaths discussed in section 6.8.2, Osiris-Apis is not the only deity with whom Sarapis could be equated during the Ptolemaic Period. In the earliest preserved demotic oaths, it is Osiris who is the Egyptian counterpart of the Greek god. The same may be true in the Greek inscription on a stela of white marble discovered at Taposiris Parva in the delta, not far from Alexandria.[209] This records the dedication of an altar and a persea tree in the reign of Ptolemy V. The relevant part reads 'On behalf of King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra, the manifest and beneficent gods: to Osiris who is also Sarapis (*Ὀσόρωι τε καὶ Σαράπιδι*), to Isis, to Anubis, and to all deities male and female'. The translation of the words *Ὀσόρωι τε καὶ Σαράπιδι* given here follows that of Devauchelle and others. If this is correct, then the text proclaims the identity of Osiris with Sarapis unambiguously. But perhaps a better translation is 'to both Osiris and Sarapis', in which case there is no equivalence between the two gods.[210]

A Ptolemaic Period offering table of uncertain provenance, now in Berlin (Äg. Inv. 2304), is inscribed with Greek, hieroglyphic, and demotic texts.[211] The Greek dedication is to 'Sarapis the great god', but the hieroglyphic and demotic inscriptions refer instead to 'Osiris of Coptos, foremost in the house of gold'. The epithets of Osiris in those texts have led some to suggest that the stela may have come from Coptos.[212] The fact that Sarapis and Osiris of Coptos are used as equivalents here constitutes further proof, if any were needed, that it was the god Osiris himself with whom Sarapis was

[209] See P. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* 1 (Oxford, 1972), pp. 252–3; P. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* 2 (Oxford, 1972), p. 401 note 486; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 221; Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 238.

[210] For this translation, cf. J. Denniston, *The Greek Particles* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 511–13; F. Dunand, *Le culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée* 1 (Leiden, 1973), pp. 114–15; Pfeiffer in McKechnie and Guillaume (eds), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*, p. 392 note 27. It should be noted that some read *Ὀσόρω* instead of *Ὀσόρωι* here and translate 'Osiris the great', treating *ω* as a Greek transcription of the Egyptian adjective ꜥ. For this alternative reading, which does not really have a bearing on the question of how to understand the *τε καί* that follows, see G. Renberg and W. Bubelis, 'The Epistolary Rhetoric of Zoilos of Aspendos and the Early Cult of Sarapis: Re-reading *P. Cair.Zen.* I 59034', *ZPE* 177 (2011), p. 190 note 46; Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 238.

[211] H. Brugsch, *Sammlung demotischer Urkunden mit gleichlautenden hieroglyphischen Texten als nächste Grundlage zur Entzifferung der Inschrift von Rosette* (Berlin, 1850), plate 4B; Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes and Other Short Texts in the Demotic Script Found on Various Objects and Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 233–4 and 273 with plate 7; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 222; Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 244.

[212] Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes and Other Short Texts in the Demotic Script Found on Various Objects and Gathered from Many Publications*, p. 234; Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 244. Another possible provenience is Thebes. For the cult of Osiris of Coptos there, see L. Coulon, 'La nécropole osirienne de Karnak sous les Ptolémées', in A. Delattre and P. Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…': Thèbes et sa région aux époques hellénistique, romaine et byzantine* (Brussels, 2008), pp. 18–19, 27–9, and 31.

identified, and not with the deceased form of the Apis bull. This point is reinforced by the rendering of the names of the dedicator and his father in the demotic and Greek inscriptions. In the demotic text the donor is called 'Pamin the son of Psenosiris'. The Greek text refers to him as 'Paniskos the son of Sarapion'. The name Psenosiris means 'son of Osiris', while Sarapion can be interpreted to mean 'son of Sarapis'. Thus the rendering of the father's name provides an additional illustration of the equivalence between Osiris and Sarapis.

6.10. THE IDENTIFICATION OF SARAPIS WITH OSIRIS IN THE ROMAN PERIOD: COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE

6.10.1. Textual evidence for the identification of Sarapis with Osiris in the Roman Period

It is of interest that most of the texts cited in our survey thus far date from the middle or latter part of the Ptolemaic Period rather than the beginning. In fact, evidence for the identification of Sarapis with Osiris in Egyptian or bilingual sources grows more abundant with the passage of time. We have more of it from the Roman Period than we do from the Ptolemaic Period. Strictly speaking, this later evidence lies outside the scope of the present discussion, but it may be useful to look at a representative selection of it to obtain a sense of how Egyptian perceptions of the relationship between the two gods continued to evolve.

A limestone offering table from Kom Abu Billu, now in Cairo (CG 23182), is inscribed with demotic and Greek texts.[213] The former is three lines in length, the latter five lines. Both are carved on the same surface of the table, the demotic to the right of the Greek. According to the latter, the object was dedicated on behalf of an individual named Apollos. The demotic text reads 'In the presence of Osiris-Apis the great god and the gods who rest […] with him'. This corresponds to 'For Sarapis the very great god and the gods who share the temple with him' in the Greek inscription.

A stela in Berlin (Äg. Inv. 2133) comes from Abydos and dates to the first century BC or first century AD.[214] The lunette is occupied by a winged solar disk with pendant uraei. Below this is a scene that shows Anubis presenting two mummiform deceased

[213] A. Kamal, *CGC: Tables d'offrandes* (Cairo, 1909), p. 133 and plate 46; Spiegelberg, *CGC: Die demotischen Inschriften*, p. 71 and plate 24; Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes and Other Short Texts in the Demotic Script Found on Various Objects and Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 239–40; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 222; Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, pp. 232–3.

[214] K. Lembke, C. Fluck, and G. Vittmann, *Ägyptens späte Blüte: Die Römer am Nil* (Mainz am Rhein, 2004), p. 88, Abb. 158; A. Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt* (Liverpool, 1992), p. 77; Moje, *Göttinger Miszellen* 217 (2008), pp. 65–9; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 222.

individuals to an enthroned figure of Osiris with Isis standing behind him. Underneath this scene are a line of hieroglyphic text, three lines of demotic, and four lines of Greek. The demotic text identifies the enthroned deity as 'Osiris the great god and lord of Abydos'. The Greek text, by contrast, calls him 'the lord (κύριος) Sarapis'.

A number of bilingual mummy labels of the Roman Period identify Sarapis with Osiris as well. In these instances, the particular form of the latter god with whom he is equated is Osiris-Sokar.[215] The labels in question come from the cemetery of Triphion on the west bank of the river opposite Akhmim in Middle Egypt and date to the second or the third century AD. The Greek texts on these labels give the names of the deceased and their fathers, and in one case the name of the dead person's mother as well. These are followed by the formula 'to the lord Sarapis' (variant: 'to the great lord Sarapis') and a date. The demotic texts on the other sides of the labels are more elaborate. These say that the *ba* of the deceased will serve Osiris-Sokar, the great god and lord of Abydos.[216]

6.10.2. Images of Osiris labelled as Sarapis

Bilingual texts did not offer the only means of expressing the identity of Sarapis and Osiris. This could also be done by labelling an image of one deity with the name of the other. A number of Roman Period stelae from Abydos show the deceased being presented to Osiris by Anubis.[217] Osiris is depicted with his traditional iconography, either standing or seated, usually with Isis standing behind him. But the Greek texts on these stela do not refer to him as Osiris. Rather they call him 'the lord Sarapis', 'Sarapis who is in Abydos', 'the lord Sarapis who is in Abydos', 'Sarapis the greatest god', or 'Sarapis the greatest god who is in Abydos'.[218] The Osirian identity of the god thus designated is emphasized on one stela, now in Alexandria (no. 3166), by writing the name Sarapis between two kneeling protective jackals.[219] The personal names mentioned on these stelae are a mixture of Egyptian and Greek ones, with the former

[215] J. Quaegebeur, 'Lettres de Thot et décrets pour Osiris', in J. Kamstra, H. Milde, and K. Wagtendonk (eds), *Funerary Symbols and Religion: Essays Dedicated to Professor M.S.H.G. Heerma van Voss* (Kampen, 1988), p. 125 note 122; B. Boyaval, *Corpus des étiquettes de momies grecques* (Lille, 1976), pp. 50 (no. 570), 82 (no. 1091), 84 (no. 1119), and 95 (no. 1293); Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 223.

[216] See Chauveau, *Les étiquettes de momies démotiques et bilingues du Musée du Louvre*, pp. 188 and 197.

[217] See J. Milne, *CGC: Greek Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 63 and 65–7, plates 10 (no. 9213) and 11 (nos. 9208, 9210, and 9211); Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt*, pp. 61–2 and 70; E. Breccia, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée d'Alexandrie 1: Iscrizioni greche e latine* (Cairo, 1911), p. 65 (no. 98) and plate 33 (no. 81); É. Bernand, 'Sur une stèle d'Abydos', *ZPE* 40 (1980), pp. 213–14.

[218] The epithet 'who is in Abydos' makes it clear that Sarapis is actually identified with Osiris on the stelae in question, so these are not cases of disjunction between text and image, where each refers to a different deity. For that phenomenon, see section 5.10.1.

[219] Breccia, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée d'Alexandrie 1*, plate 33 (no. 81).

predominating. In one instance, the deceased has an Egyptian name and her father a Greek one.[220]

A stela from Middle Egypt now in the Louvre (C 278) displays another interesting juxtaposition of image and text.[221] The lunette contains a winged sun disk with pendant uraei above two recumbent jackals. The scene in the register below this shows three men in supplication before Osiris, with Anubis standing behind them, evidently having just ushered them into the presence of the god of the dead. Osiris is depicted in the traditional manner, mummiform, wearing the *atef*-crown, and holding the crook and flail in his hands. Below this scene is a Greek text of eight lines, which identifies the three men as boatmen who were murdered in the port of Poukhis in the Antaeopolite nome and whose vessel was set on fire. All three have Egyptian names. Two are brothers and the third is their maternal uncle. The text begins with the words of the boatmen's plea: *Ἀντιλαβοῦ κύριε Σάραπι*, 'Come to our aid, lord Sarapis.' What is striking here is that the scene shows them supplicating before Osiris, while in the text they address their request to Sarapis. Thus the identity of the two is assured.

6.10.3. Using context to determine when Sarapis is used as an alternative name for Osiris

Even in the absence of bilingual texts, or texts combined with images, it is still possible to determine that Sarapis is being used as an alternative name for Osiris in some cases if there is a sufficient amount of other contextual evidence. This is nicely illustrated by Greek graffiti of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods in the temple of Seti I at Abydos, the so-called Memnonion. A number of these say that the writer has come to worship Sarapis.[222] However, the location in which the texts are inscribed, an edifice closely associated with Osiris, makes it clear that he is the real object of the visitor's devotion. Similarly, where Greek papyri of the Roman Period refer to 26 Khoiak in connection with a *Σαραπιεῖα*, or feast in honour of Sarapis, we can be fairly confident that this is an Osirian feast, since the day in question was the culmination of the Osiris mysteries, which marked the triumph of the god over his enemies.[223]

[220] Milne, *CGC: Greek Inscriptions*, plate 11 (no. 9210); Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt*, p. 62.

[221] See Bernand, *Inscriptions grecques d'Égypte et de Nubie au Musée du Louvre*, pp. 138–40 and plate 51; Quaegebeur in Kamstra, Milde, and Wagtendonk (eds), *Funerary Symbols and Religion*, p. 118; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 222.

[222] See P. Perdrizet and G. Lefebvre, *Les graffites grecs du Memnonion d'Abydos* (Nancy, Paris, and Strasbourg, 1919), p. 121.

[223] F. Perpillou-Thomas, *Fêtes d'Égypte ptolémaïque et romaine d'après la documentation papyrologique grecque* (Leuven, 1993), pp. 130–2. For the importance of 26 Khoiak, see Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 141.

6.10.4. Significance of the Roman Period evidence for the identification of Sarapis with Osiris

The Roman Period material surveyed in sections 6.10.1–3 is significant for a number of reasons. First, it comes from sites where no evidence for acceptance of the identity of Sarapis with Osiris among Egyptians is known from the Ptolemaic Period. Thus it extends the boundaries of the area in which the phenomenon is attested, and helps us to trace its spread. Second, it acquaints us with additional ways that were used to express the identity of the two deities, involving not only interplay between texts written in different languages, but interplay between text and image as well.

Third, the evidence from the Roman Period documents Egyptian acceptance of the equation of Sarapis and Osiris in a wider range of written contexts than before. Of particular significance, from our perspective, is the fact that Sarapis as an alternative name for Osiris starts to appear in texts relating to the afterlife at this time. Fourth and finally, the greater abundance of evidence for the equation of the two gods in the Roman Period, as compared with the preceding Ptolemaic Period, is itself of considerable importance. Coupled with the fact that the majority of the Ptolemaic evidence comes from the middle or end of that period, rather than the beginning, it suggests that the cult of Sarapis took quite a long time to spread among the Egyptian population and did so only gradually.

This idea is supported by another type of evidence that we have not yet examined in any detail, that provided by personal names. This can yield useful information about the spread and popularity of ancient cults and divinities.[224] A number of salient facts emerge from a study of personal names incorporating or derived from that of Sarapis in papyri and inscriptions from Egypt. One is that no names derived from that of the god occur in our sources prior to 250 BC, and they are rare before the last quarter of the third century.[225] A total of 33 persons with a Sarapis-related name are attested in sources of the third century BC, 123 in those of the second century BC, 99 in those of the first century BC, 423 in those of the first century AD, 2137 in those of the second century AD, 1297 in those of the third century AD, and 485 in those of the fourth century AD.[226]

It will be seen from this that the popularity of such names reaches a peak in the second and third centuries AD.[227] There are actually more individuals with Sarapis-related names (61) attested in sources of the seventh century AD, by which time Christianity had long since supplanted the cults of Sarapis and his fellow deities in Egypt, than there are in those of the third century BC, when according to some ancient and modern authors the Ptolemies were propagating his worship with such zeal.[228]

[224] See Clarysse and Paganini, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 55 (2009), p. 68.
[225] Ibid., pp. 74–5. [226] Ibid., p. 72.
[227] The popularity of Sarapis and his cult appears to have reached its peak elsewhere in the Mediterranean world at this time as well. See R. Wild, *Water in the Cultic Worship of Isis and Sarapis* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 4–7 and 149.
[228] By the seventh century AD, of course, names derived from or associated with that of Sarapis were religiously neutral, as is demonstrated by a lease from Hermopolis written in 555, in which one of the lessors is 'the Holy Martyrion of the Three Holy Martyrs of the Holy Sarapeion'. Cf. R. Bagnall, 'Models and

Thus the evidence of personal names confirms the idea that veneration of Sarapis was slow to take root in Egypt.

One of the limitations of this type of evidence is that it does not give us precise details about the ethnicity of those who bore Sarapis-related names. To some extent we can make up for this deficiency by looking at the names of the parents or children of such individuals. What this reveals is that in the vast majority of cases where someone has a Sarapis-related name and the name of a parent or child is known, that name is a Greek one. It is much rarer for an individual with a Sarapis-related name to have a parent or child with an Egyptian name.[229] Thus such names are largely restricted to families in which Greek names were in use over a period of at least two generations, which is probably a sign that they viewed themselves as culturally Greek rather than Egyptian.

6.11. SARAPIS/OSIRIS AS RULER AND SAVIOUR OF THE DEAD

Did the identification of Sarapis with Osiris influence Egyptian ideas about the relationship between the latter god and the deceased? It has to be admitted that we do not have a great deal of evidence at our disposal to answer this question, and what there is comes mainly from the Roman Period rather than the Ptolemaic Period. This is because, as we have seen, it is only then that Sarapis as an alternative name for Osiris starts to appear in texts relating to the afterlife. Only in the Roman Period do we have written sources that record what the deceased hoped or expected Osiris would do for them in this form, and these are relatively few in number.

One such source is Louvre Stela C 278. As seen in section 6.10.2, this depicts three Egyptian boatmen who had been murdered and whose vessel had been set on fire in the act of supplicating before Osiris. They beseech him with the words 'Come to our aid, lord Sarapis.' It has been suggested that the boatmen are asking the god to avenge their murders.[230] This is certainly a plausible suggestion, but it could also be the case that they are requesting him to help or assist them in the underworld more generally, without reference to any specific act of wrongdoing that needs to be redressed. Compare the text inscribed on Alexandria Stela 3166, also mentioned in section 6.10.2, where the deceased, a girl with the Egyptian name Tphous, proclaims 'I appeal to the lord Sarapis.'[231]

Evidence in the Study of Religion in Late Roman Egypt', in J. Hahn, S. Emmel, and U. Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden and Boston, 2008), p. 24 note 6.

[229] Clarysse and Paganini, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 55 (2009), p. 78.

[230] Bernand, *Inscriptions grecques d'Égypte et de Nubie au Musée du Louvre*, p. 139.

[231] For the correct reading of the text, see Bernand, *ZPE* 40 (1980), p. 214. Tphous is a Greek transcription of Egyptian *Tȝ-ḥfȝ.t*. See K. van Landuyt, 'The Soter Family: Genealogy and Onomastics', in S. Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne, 1995), p. 79.

Another informative source is Louvre Stela N 328. This dates to the first century AD and is thought to have come from Abydos. It was inscribed for a man called Apollonios who was a native of the city of Lycopolis (= Egyptian Siut).[232] The greater part of the stela is devoted to a scene showing a man in Egyptian dress censing and presenting offerings before a standing figure of Osiris. Some identify this man as the deceased, others think he is a priest performing a ritual for the god's benefit.[233] Osiris has his usual iconography. He is depicted in the form of a mummy with a cloak, wearing the *atef*-crown, and holding the crook and flail. A standard surmounted by a figure of the god Wepwaut in jackal form is in front of him.[234] Below this scene is a Greek inscription which is seven lines in length. It says: 'Apollonios son of Eros the son of Eros, and of Aristion his mother, who is called the son of Erospsa, from Lycopolis, has died prematurely in the seventh year, on the twenty-first of the month Pakhon, aged 34 years, 5 months, and 15 days.[235] Lord Sarapis, grant him triumph over his enemies.'

In this inscription, the person on whose behalf Sarapis is invoked has a Greek name rather than an Egyptian one, as do his father, mother, and grandfather. Nevertheless, the favour sought from the god is analogous to those sought by the family of Egyptian boatmen in the text on Louvre Stela C 278, and the Egyptian girl in the text on Alexandria Stela 3166, which suggests that the image of the deity presented in these three sources was not restricted to a single ethnic group. In all three texts, there is an emphasis upon Sarapis/Osiris as a ruler, a saviour, an arbiter of conflicts who punishes enemies. We no longer see a passive Osiris, one who needs to be protected from danger by others, as we do in many sources from earlier periods of Egyptian history. Instead, we are confronted by an active god, a king who is expected to hear the pleas of his subjects and exert himself on their behalf. The pleas that these deceased individuals address to the god are not dissimilar to those addressed to Osiris by the living. Compare, for example, a Greek graffito in the temple of Seti I at Abydos in which the writer says 'I have come to Abydos. Save me, Osiris.'[236] Since Sarapis is himself a royal god, closely associated with kingship, and explicitly designated as a saviour,[237] we may ask whether this image of Osiris and what he is expected to do for the deceased has been influenced in any way by his association with that deity.

[232] P. Koemoth, 'À propos de la stèle d'*Apollônios* (Louvre N 328): Ophoïs, Osiris et Sérapis en Abydos', *SAK* 29 (2001), pp. 217–33 and plate 7; Bernand, *Inscriptions grecques d'Égypte et de Nubie au Musée du Louvre*, pp. 143–4, no. 92, and plate 52 (there labelled incorrectly as no. 91).

[233] See ibid., p. 143; Koemoth, *SAK* 29 (2001), p. 218.

[234] For the role of this god in the mysteries of Osiris celebrated at Abydos, see sections 4.12.1 and 4.12.4.

[235] Koemoth, *SAK* 29 (2001), p. 217, translates '25 jours', but ιϵ is clear on the published photograph.

[236] Perdrizet and Lefebvre, *Les graffites grecs du Memnonion d'Abydos*, p. 72 (no. 377). Cf. I. Rutherford, 'Pilgrimage in Greco-Roman Egypt: New Perspectives on Graffiti from the Memnonion at Abydos', in R. Matthews and C. Roemer (eds), *Ancient Perspectives on Egypt* (London, 2003), p. 179.

[237] Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 224 note 60; Legras in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis*, p. 97.

6.12. EARLIER EGYPTIAN ANTECEDENTS FOR OSIRIS AS RULER AND SAVIOUR

6.12.1. Conceptions of Osiris as active ruler and protector prior to the Ptolemaic Period

The idea that the image of Osiris as a strong, active ruler and saviour arose as a result of his identification with Sarapis might seem attractive at first sight, but I would like to propose a different explanation for its origin, which has the advantage of taking into account not just the evidence of the Graeco-Roman Period, but that of earlier periods as well. There were important developments in the Egyptian conception of Osiris during the course of the first millennium BC, not all of which directly concerned his relationship with the deceased. Among these were an increased emphasis on the association of Osiris with kingship, and a tendency to portray him not just as the ruler of the underworld, but as the ruler of this one as well.[238] As a result, it became more common for his name to be written in a cartouche.[239] Connected with this was an increased tendency, in hymns and other types of text, to see in Osiris as much a god of the living as a god of the dead. Thus there were good Egyptian antecedents for the image of Osiris as a powerful ruler who defends the interests of his subjects that we find in the three stelae discussed in section 6.11. We do not have to ascribe it to foreign influence or explain it as a development of the Ptolemaic Period.

The idea of Osiris as an active, even bellicose, god who punishes or destroys enemies is attested as early as the Pyramid Texts.[240] The concept of him as king of the living can be traced back to the Middle Kingdom.[241] A famous hymn inscribed on the New Kingdom Louvre Stela C 286 describes Osiris as the one who established justice throughout the two banks, and placed the son on his father's seat. It goes on to laud him as 'the one with great strength when he fells the rebel, whose arm is powerful when he slays his foe, who instils fear of himself among the enemies, who puts an end to those who plot evil, the one with firm heart when he tramples those destined for sacrifice'.[242] The inscription on a vase

[238] Coulon in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 16–17; Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 224; A. Kucharek, 'Auf der Suche nach Konstruktionen der Macht: Die Festprozession des Osiris in Karnak', in J. Maram, C. Juwig, H. Schwengel, and U. Thaler (eds), *Constructing Power—Architecture, Ideology and Social Practice* (Hamburg, 2006), pp. 125–6.

[239] See, for example, J. Leclant, 'Osiris *pꜣ-wšb-ỉꜣḏ*', in O. Firchow (ed.), *Ägyptologische Studien* (Berlin, 1955), pp. 198–9; J. Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne* (Cairo, 1965), p. 266; Coulon in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, p. 16; G. Vittmann, 'Eine hieroglyphisch-demotische Totenstele aus Unterägypten(?)', *Enchoria* 18 (1991), pp. 130–1; A. Tillier, 'À propos de *nṯr nfr* comme épithète divine: Contribution à l'étude d'Osiris-roi au Moyen Empire', *RdE* 62 (2011), pp. 161 and 163.

[240] Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507*, pp. 101–2.

[241] See I. Ladynin, Review of D. Bröckelmann and A. Klug (eds), *In Pharaos Staat: Festschrift für Rolf Gundlach zum 75. Geburtstag*, in *BiOr* 66 (2009), p. 210; Tillier, *RdE* 62 (2011), pp. 159–74.

[242] A. Moret, 'La légende d'Osiris à l'époque thébaine d'après l'hymne à Osiris du Louvre', *BIFAO* 30 (1930), plate 1, lines 9–10.

discovered at Umm el-Qaab dating to the reign of Ramesses II records an interesting variant of the story of Osiris's accession as king according to which Geb gave him two-thirds of Egypt and the desert to rule and the remaining third to the rest of his children by Nut.[243] The importance of the royal aspect of the god in this period is also reflected in the fact that during the co-regency of Seti I with Ramesses II, the older king was known as 'the living Osiris'.[244]

But these conceptions become even more prominent in the first millennium BC. The scenes on a coffin of twenty-first dynasty date depict the *sed*-festival of Osiris.[245] The god's royal aspect is likewise emphasized in a hymn inscribed in the chapel of Osiris lord of eternity at Karnak, a structure that was built and decorated in the reigns of the Saite kings Amasis and Psammetichus III. The hymn in question is attested in a number of other versions, ranging in date from the Saite Period to the Ptolemaic Period, and an extract is quoted in a hieratic papyrus of the first or second century AD.[246] It hails Osiris as the king of the two lands, the perfect ruler, who gives birth to justice and does away with evil, who governs on the throne of Atum, a god who judges things, who drives away those who rebel against him.[247]

We may also compare the proliferation of popular cults of Osiris at Karnak during the first millennium BC, as witnessed by the growing number of small temples and chapels dedicated to him there, in particular under the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth dynasties.[248] In addition to the one described in the preceding paragraph, these include monuments constructed for Osiris the giver of life,[249] Osiris lord of life who grants jubilees,[250] Osiris

[243] G. Daressy, 'Notes et remarques', *Recueil de Travaux* 24 (1902), p. 164.

[244] See F. Pumpenmeier, 'Eine Gruppe von Schabtis Amenophis' II. aus Abydos', in E.-M. Engel, V. Müller, and U. Hartung (eds), *Zeichen aus dem Sand: Streiflichter aus Ägyptens Geschichte zu Ehren von Günter Dreyer* (Wiesbaden, 2008), p. 550.

[245] G. Möller, 'Das *Ḥb-śd* des Osiris nach Sargdarstellungen des neuen Reiches', *ZÄS* 39 (1901), pp. 71–4. Cf. Coulon in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, p. 16 note 108.

[246] C. Traunecker, 'La chapelle d'Osiris "seigneur de l'éternité-*neheh*" à Karnak', in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 164–72; D. Luft, *Osiris-Hymnen: Wechselnde Materialisierungen und Kontexte* 1 (Tübingen, forthcoming); D. Luft, *Osiris-Hymnen: Wechselnde Materialisierungen und Kontexte* 2 (Tübingen, forthcoming).

[247] Traunecker in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 167–8.

[248] See C. Jurman, 'The Osiris Chapels of the Third Intermediate Period and the Late Period at Karnak: Some Aspects of their Religious and Historical Significance', in H. Győry (ed.), *Aegyptus et Pannonia 3: Acta Symposii anno 2004* (Budapest, 2006), pp. 107–30; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, pp. 262–86; Coulon in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 14–16; Wüthrich, *Éléments de théologie thébaine*, pp. 38–9; Kucharek in Maram, Juwig, Schwengel, and Thaler (eds), *Constructing Power—Architecture, Ideology and Social Practice*, pp. 119–28.

[249] *PM* II², pp. 5–6 and 17–19; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, pp. 91–3 and 99–105.

[250] *PM* II², pp. 13–14; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, p. 94.

lord of life,[251] Osiris-Ptah lord of life,[252] Osiris the one whom she loves,[253] Osiris ruler of eternity,[254] Osiris delimiter of the balanites tree,[255] Osiris Wennefer within the balanites tree,[256] Osiris Wennefer lord of sustenance,[257] and Osiris the rescuer of the afflicted.[258] The last of these cult epithets provides further evidence for a pre-Ptolemaic conception of Osiris as a deity to whom people could turn for aid in times of trouble, as do others like 'Osiris the saviour'[259] and 'Osiris who rescues his servant in the underworld',[260] both of which are attested as early as the twenty-fifth dynasty. Other signs of increased popular devotion to the god at this time are the greater frequency of personal names that incorporate that of Osiris,[261] and the large number of votive bronze figurines that were deposited in sanctuaries dedicated to him.[262]

Evidence for the conception of Osiris as a saviour in time of need prior to the foundation of the Ptolemaic dynasty is not restricted to texts written in the Egyptian language. It also occurs in the so-called curse of Artemisia, the oldest Greek document preserved on papyrus. The text comes from Saqqara and was written during the fourth century BC. It records a complaint made to Osiris by a woman called Artemisia against the father of her daughter. Although her name is Greek, that of her father is Egyptian. It

[251] *PM* II², pp. 14–15; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, pp. 94–6.

[252] *PM* II², p. 278; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, pp. 110–13 and 351–2.

[253] *PM* II², p. 19; L. Coulon, 'Osiris chez Hérodote', in L. Coulon, P. Giovannelli-Jouanna, and F. Kimmel-Clauzet (eds), *Hérodote et l'Égypte: Regards croisés sur le livre II de l'Enquête d'Hérodote* (Lyon, 2013), pp. 183–4.

[254] *PM* II², pp. 204–6; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, pp. 47–54; R. Fazzini, 'Addendum to the Discussions on the Chapel of Osiris Heqa-Djet', in G. Broekman, R. Demarée, and O. Kaper (eds), *The Libyan Period in Egypt: Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21st–24th Dynasties: Proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25–27 October 2007* (Leuven, 2009), pp. 446–7.

[255] *PM* II², pp. 203–4; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, p. 21; L. Coulon, 'Deux versions monumentales de la liturgie des rites décadaires de Djémé provenant de Karnak', in B. Backes and J. Dieleman (eds), *Liturgical Texts for Osiris and the Deceased in Late Period and Greco-Roman Egypt* (Wiesbaden, 2015), p. 119 note 49.

[256] *PM* II², pp. 202–3; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, pp. 41–7.

[257] *PM* II², pp. 193–4; L. Coulon and C. Defernez, 'La chapelle d'Osiris Ounnefer Neb-Djefaou à Karnak: Rapport préliminaire des fouilles et travaux 2000–2004', *BIFAO* 104 (2004), pp. 135–90.

[258] *PM* II², pp. 194–5; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, pp. 23–36; Leclant in Firchow (ed.), *Ägyptologische Studien*, pp. 197–204.

[259] See ibid., p. 199; Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne*, pp. 32 and 273 with plate 10.

[260] E. Graefe and M. Wassef, 'Eine fromme Stiftung für den Gott Osiris-der-seinen-Anhänger-in-der-Unterwelt-rettet aus dem Jahre 21 des Taharqa (670 v. Chr.)', *MDAIK* 35 (1979), pp. 104 and 107 note c.

[261] J. Yoyotte, 'Osiris dans la region d'Alexandrie', in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, p. 33.

[262] Coulon in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 12–13.

is notable that she invokes the god in the form Ὀσερᾶπις, and thus clearly addresses the Egyptian deity Osiris-Apis.[263]

Artemisia says: 'O master Oserapis and you gods who sit with Oserapis, complaint is made to you by me, Artemisia, daughter of Amasis, against the father of my daughter, who robbed her of the funeral gifts and of burial. If, then, he has not done right to me and to his children, as indeed he has done wrong to me and to his children, may then Oserapis and the gods give to him that he have no burial from his children and that his parents do not bury him. While the accusation is deposited here may he perish miserably both by sea and by land, both himself and what is his, through Oserapis and the gods who sit in Poserapis,[264] and may he find no favour from Oserapis or the gods who sit with Oserapis. Artemisia has deposited this petition, beseeching Oserapis to adjudge the suit, him and the gods who sit with Oserapis. While the petition lies here may the father of the girl find no favour from the gods; and whoever shall remove this writing and wrong Artemisia, may the god bring punishment on him.'

Artemisia feels that she has been wronged, so she approaches Osiris for redress. Since her dead daughter's father has not provided her with a proper burial, she requests that he be denied one as well. She asks Osiris and the gods who sit with him to hear her plea and adjudicate. The petition of Artemisia is one of a number of extant letters written to deities to seek their assistance, most of them in Egyptian rather than Greek. Typically these were deposited in places where it was envisaged that the gods to whom they were addressed would be able to read them.[265] Artemisia's letter is of particular significance, since it shows that the conception of Osiris as a helper of those in need was already familiar to Greek-speaking residents of Egypt before the introduction of Sarapis.

6.12.2. Osiris as an oracular deity prior to the Ptolemaic Period

Apart from his roles as king, arbiter of human affairs, and saviour, there were others attributed to Osiris in texts of the Graeco-Roman Period which some think he acquired as a consequence of being identified with Sarapis. One of these is the role of oracular deity.[266] Here too, however, it is possible to find earlier Egyptian antecedents, so the fact that Osiris was credited with the power to predict future events did not result from his identification with Sarapis. As Quack has shown, oracular questions were addressed to Osiris-Apis even before the start of the Ptolemaic Period.[267]

[263] For the text, see U. Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (Ältere Funde)* 1 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927), pp. 97–104. The translation given here reproduces that in H. Bell, *Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Liverpool, 1953), pp. 3–4.

[264] Poserapis is a Greek transcription of Egyptian *pr Wsỉr-Ḥp*, 'the domain of Osiris-Apis'.

[265] See Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 235, and literature cited there. The earliest known Egyptian letter to Osiris-Apis dates to the sixth century BC.

[266] For Osiris as a giver of oracles in the Graeco-Roman Period, see section 7.3.10.

[267] Quack and Paarmann in Zenzen, Hölscher, Paarmann, and Trampedach (eds), *Aneignung und Abgrenzung*, p. 235.

6.12.3. Summary of evidence

In the light of evidence like that presented in sections 6.12.1–2, I suggest that what really happened was not that in the Ptolemaic Period Osiris was identified with Sarapis and acquired new powers and attributes as a result. It was rather that the new image of Osiris which arose earlier in the first millennium BC, itself building upon older ideas, in conjunction with the powers and attributes that were ascribed to him then, facilitated and led to his identification with Sarapis in the Ptolemaic Period. If this view is correct, then the rise to prominence of the latter god did not influence Egyptian perceptions of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased. To the extent that these appear to be different in the Graeco-Roman Period to what we find in earlier periods of Egyptian history, the difference is the result of a purely internal development, which began long before the Ptolemies arrived in Egypt.

6.13. THE IMPACT OF IDENTIFICATION WITH SARAPIS ON EGYPTIAN PERCEPTIONS OF OSIRIS: FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In considering the possible impact that identification with Sarapis may have had on Egyptian perceptions of Osiris, there are three further points that we should bear in mind. First, even after a link between Sarapis and a form of Osiris had been established, the practice of equating one with the other was by no means universal.[268] As we saw in section 6.8.2, the demotic P. Cairo 31178, written in 179 BC, treats them as two distinct gods. Second, Sarapis was not the only Greek deity with whom Osiris could be equated. Another was Dionysos, who also benefited from the patronage of the Ptolemies.[269] The equation of Osiris with Dionysos is already mentioned in Herodotus (II, 42); thus it pre-dates the start of the Ptolemaic dynasty and the equation of Osiris with Sarapis.[270] The latter god could be identified with Dionysos as well,[271] and this could have been an additional factor that contributed to his identification with Osiris.

[268] Cf. Pfeiffer in McKechnie and Guillaume (eds), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*, p. 392.

[269] Coulon in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, p. 17; F. Dunand, 'Les associations dionysiaques au service du pouvoir lagide (IIIe s. av. J.-C.)', in École française de Rome (ed.), *L'Association dionysiaque dans les sociétés anciennes: Actes de la table ronde organisée par l'École française de Rome* (Rome, 1986), pp. 85–103.

[270] See Stambaugh, *Sarapis Under the Early Ptolemies*, pp. 53–5; Kákosy in Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 18.5, pp. 2958–9; Coulon in Coulon, Giovannelli-Jouanna, and Kimmel-Clauzet (eds), *Hérodote et l'Égypte: Regards croisés sur le livre II de l'Enquête d'Hérodote*, pp. 177–81.

[271] Stambaugh, *Sarapis Under the Early Ptolemies*, pp. 55–9.

Evidence for the equation of Osiris with Dionysos is provided by 'double' names where Egyptian Petosorapis or Petosiris corresponds to Greek Dionysios.[272] See also the epithet 'new Dionysos' adopted by Ptolemy XII, which was translated into Egyptian as *Wsỉr ḥwn*, 'young Osiris'.[273] Some Greek dedications refer to 'Dionysos, also called Petempamentes' or 'Petempamentes, also called Dionysos', Petempamentes being a Greek transcription of an Egyptian epithet meaning 'the one who is in the west', i.e. Osiris.[274] There is nothing to suggest that this equation had any real impact on conceptions of the hereafter, however. Unlike Sarapis, Dionysos was never used as an alternative name for Osiris in texts relating to the afterlife. Nevertheless, Dionysian features are combined with more traditional iconography in the decoration of some tombs. Thus, the outside of the entrance to the Main Tomb in the Great Catacomb at Kom el-Shoqafa in Alexandria is guarded by two serpents wearing the double crown. In their coils they enfold a pine cone, the symbol of Dionysos, and the serpent staff of Hermes. Above them are gorgons' heads carved on shields.[275] It is probable that all of these symbols were selected for their apotropaic power, and combined with one another to afford maximum protection against evil entities that might seek to enter the tomb and harm its occupants.[276]

During the Khoiak festival of Osiris, a figure of the god was transported in a bark.[277] In the region of Canopus in the delta, the vessel in question conveyed him on a canal that led from the nearby town of Herakleion to the temple of Osiris in Canopus itself. Along this canal, many deposits containing implements used for censing and offering libations have been discovered. In some of them, spoons or ladles with long curved handles terminating in the head of a duck or goose were found.[278] These resemble ladles used by bacchantes in scenes on Attic vases of the fourth and fifth centuries BC. Yoyotte thinks the spoons in question provide evidence that Dionysiac celebrations took place along the canal when Osiris was transported in his bark. If he is correct, then this could be an interesting example of the addition of a popular Greek element to a traditional Egyptian ritual. But it should be noted that such spoons are already attested in Egypt in the twenty-first dynasty, long before there is any evidence for worship of

[272] See Devauchelle in Gasse, Servajean, and Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum* 2, p. 218 note 21; W. Clarysse, 'The Real Name of Dionysios Petosarapis', in W. Claes, H. de Meulenaere, and S. Hendrickx (eds), *Elkab and Beyond: Studies in Honour of Luc Limme* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2009), pp. 213–22.

[273] Legras in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis*, pp. 111–12.

[274] Stambaugh, *Sarapis Under the Early Ptolemies*, p. 54; Coulon in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, p. 9 note 66.

[275] See Venit, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria*, pp. 129–30.

[276] See discussion of the figure of Anubis on the inside of the entrance in section 6.4.2.

[277] See sections 4.12.1 and 4.12.4.

[278] Yoyotte in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 37–8; J. Yoyotte, 'Rites and Forms of Osiris Worship in Herakleion and Canopus', in F. Goddio and M. Clauss (eds), *Egypt's Sunken Treasures* (Munich, Berlin, London, and New York, 2006), pp. 195–203; Bel, Giroire, Gombert-Meurice, and Rutschowscaya (eds), *L'Orient romain et byzantin au Louvre*, pp. 253 and 255.

Dionysos there, so perhaps the ones found at Canopus had a different function and their resemblance to the ladles used by the bacchantes is fortuitous.

The third point to bear in mind in considering the possible impact that identification with Sarapis may have had on Egyptian perceptions of Osiris is that for every Egyptian text which equates the two gods or mentions them in conjunction, there are dozens, probably even hundreds, where Osiris is the focus of attention and Sarapis is completely ignored. This, more than anything else, reveals the limits of his penetration into the consciousness of ordinary Egyptians. For the vast majority of the Egyptian population, whether priests or members of the laity, the Greek god might just as well never have existed.

6.14. THE LIMITATIONS OF ROYAL POWER AS AN AGENT OF RELIGIOUS CHANGE

6.14.1. What efforts did the Ptolemies make to promote the cult of Sarapis and his identification with Osiris within Egypt?

This brings us back to the question of whether kings were able to influence developments in the religious sphere and, if so, to what extent.[279] The elevation of Sarapis to the status of a state deity under Ptolemaic sponsorship is certainly one of the best known instances of a religious change that occurred as a result of royal intervention, but as far as one can judge from the available evidence, this did not have a significant impact, within Egypt at least, outside court and official circles. If the Ptolemies did promote the cult of the god for political reasons, they seem to have done so in a rather desultory way. Despite the testimony of writers like Tacitus and Plutarch, there is very little evidence for the spread of the cult of Sarapis in Egypt under the first few Ptolemaic rulers, even though it was in their reigns that the need to find a symbol to unite the disparate groups that made up the kingdom they had inherited would have been most acute.

The same applies to the identification of Sarapis with Osiris. Here too, there is little evidence of a sustained effort on the part of the state to persuade people to adopt this idea. If there was such an effort, it can hardly be termed a success. To be sure, the Ptolemies fostered a relationship between Sarapis and Osiris as symbols of kingship. In doing so, they exploited this for political purposes, using it to enhance the prestige of their family line by association with those two royal deities. But how much of a religious change did this constitute? Egyptian rulers had already sought to legitimize themselves by association with their divine counterparts for centuries. With the

[279] On this question, see comments of Naerebout in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis*, pp. 55–8.

increasing emphasis upon the royal status of Osiris during the first millennium BC, it is not surprising that he came to be one of the main deities whom kings sought to utilize for this purpose. In associating themselves with Osiris, therefore, the Ptolemies were simply continuing an indigenous Egyptian tradition of long standing. Nor, as we shall see, did they feel it obligatory to involve Sarapis when doing so.

6.14.2. Attempts by Ptolemaic rulers to associate themselves with Osiris without reference to Sarapis

A good example of how the Ptolemies proclaimed their close connection with Osiris without making any reference to Sarapis is provided by a series of hieratic inscriptions relating to the burials of Osiris figurines at a place called Perkhefa in the vicinity of Oxyrhynchus. The majority of these are dated in the reigns of Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VIII in the middle of the second century BC. The figurines in question were manufactured during the festival celebrated for the god in the month of Khoiak. They were placed in niches, and above each niche a short text was written with the form 'Regnal year X, excellent year of King Ptolemy and King Osiris, foremost of the westerners, the great god and lord of Perkhefa'. In effect, the regnal year of the king is treated as if it were that of Osiris as well, thus linking ruler and deity together.[280]

Likewise in the burial place reserved for Osiris figurines at Karnak, cartouches bearing the names of Ptolemy IV and his wife Arsinoe III are inscribed alongside those containing the names of Osiris and Isis.[281] As Coulon has noted, and as the texts cited in the preceding paragraph confirm, one has here an expression of a symbiosis between the Ptolemaic ruler and his divine counterpart, in which the terrestrial time-span of the former is juxtaposed with that of the latter, to ensure its renewal on an annual basis in the same way as that of Osiris.

The text on the foot end of a wooden coffin used in the burial of a terracotta figurine of Sokar-Osiris, now in Barcelona, identifies Ptolemy VIII as the beloved of that god and of 'the sibling gods, the beneficent gods, the father-loving gods, the manifest gods, the god who honours his father, and the mother-loving god', thus associating his royal ancestors with the deity whose image was placed in the coffin. Similar examples are known from other collections.[282] These further illustrate how the Ptolemies utilized the burial places of such figurines, which were the focal point of the god's local cult, as

[280] See H. Amer, 'Les catacombes osiriennes d'Oxyrhynchos', in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 272–3; L. Coulon, 'Les inscriptions des catacombes osiriennes d'Oxyrhynchos: Témoignages du culte d'Osiris sous les règnes de Ptolémée VI et Ptolémée VIII', in A. Jördens and J. Quack (eds), *Ägypten zwischen innerem Zwist und äußerem Druck: Die Zeit Ptolemaios' VI. bis VIII.* (Wiesbaden, 2011), pp. 81–7.

[281] Coulon in Delattre and Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, p. 24.

[282] M. Minas, 'Die ptolemäischen Sokar-Osiris-Mumien: Neue Erkentnisse zum ägyptischen Dynastiekult der Ptolemäer', *MDAIK* 62 (2006), pp. 197–213.

venues to proclaim the link between their line and Osiris.[283] At Karnak, and perhaps elsewhere, the same priests who performed the rites for these figurines may have been responsible for the cult of royal statues as well, further underlining the connection between the rulers and these sacred precincts.[284] This desire on the part of the Ptolemies to advertise their association with Osiris also helps to explain the fact that the epithet 'young Osiris' was sometimes inserted in the cartouche of Ptolemy XII.[285]

6.14.3. Contested associations with Osiris in the Ptolemaic Period

But it was not only members of the Ptolemaic dynasty who sought to affiliate themselves with the god. The ruler's status as the earthly counterpart and favoured representative of Osiris was sometimes contested. Two rebel kings controlled Upper Egypt between 205 and 186 BC. One of these was called Harwennefer, the other Ankhwennefer.[286] The second element of both names, Wennefer, is actually an appellation of Osiris frequently used in contexts where the god's royal status is foregrounded.[287] Its incorporation in the names of these kings proclaimed their close connection with Osiris and asserted the legitimacy of their rule by linking it with his.[288] In a graffito in the temple of Seti I at Abydos, one of these rebels, Harwennefer, is called 'beloved of Isis and Osiris'.[289]

Another rebellion broke out in 168 BC, this one led by a certain Dionysios, also called Petosorapis.[290] Once again, his name incorporates that of a form of Osiris, in this case Osiris-Apis.[291] A further revolt started in 132/1 BC. The instigator is identified in a demotic document as 'Pharaoh Harsiesis-Siosiris'. His name means 'Horus the son of Isis and son of Osiris'.[292] Is it a coincidence that all these rebels had names that invoked Osiris as a divine patron? Did receiving such a name at birth predispose one towards rebellion? Or did these rebels deliberately adopt names for themselves that emphasized

[283] See Coulon in Delattre and Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, pp. 24–5; Coulon in Jördens and Quack (eds), *Ägypten zwischen innerem Zwist und äußerem Druck*, pp. 90–1.

[284] Coulon in Delattre and Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, pp. 27–32.

[285] Legras in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis*, pp. 111–12. Cf. section 6.13.

[286] See P. Pestman, 'Haronnophris and Chaonnophris: Two Indigenous Pharaohs in Ptolemaic Egypt (205–186 B.C.)', in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 101–37; A.-E. Véïsse, *Les 'révoltes égyptiennes': Recherches sur les troubles intérieurs en Égypte du règne de Ptolémée III Evergète à la conquête romaine* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2004), pp. 295–6 (s.v. Chaonnophris and Haronnophris).

[287] See Tillier, *RdE* 62 (2011), pp. 161–3. For writings of Wennefer in a cartouche, see ibid., p. 161; Vittmann, *Enchoria* 18 (1991), p. 130.

[288] Coulon in Delattre and Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, pp. 24–5.

[289] P. Pestman, *Recueil de textes démotiques et bilingues* 1 (Leiden, 1977), pp. 102–5; Coulon in Delattre and Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, p. 25 note 35.

[290] Clarysse in Claes, de Meulenaere, and Hendrickx (eds), *Elkab and Beyond*, p. 213; Véïsse, *Les 'révoltes égyptiennes'*, p. 296 (s.v. Dionysios Pétosarapis).

[291] For the equivalence of the names Dionysios and Petosorapis, see section 6.13.

[292] Véïsse, *Les 'révoltes égyptiennes'*, p. 296 (s.v. Harsièsis); P. Pestman, *Chronologie égyptienne d'après les textes démotiques* (Leiden, 1967), pp. 58–61. As noted ibid., p. 58, a contemporary Greek text refers to him as 'Harsiesis the enemy of the gods', deleting the reference to Osiris.

their connection with Osiris? We cannot be certain which explanation is correct, but in my opinion, the last is the most likely one.

6.14.4. Summary of evidence relating to royal power and religious change in Ptolemaic Egypt

Based on the evidence considered in the second half of this chapter, it would seem that the ability of the Ptolemies to influence what people actually believed about Osiris was limited. For the most part they were content to follow the example of their predecessors in defining their relation to the deity. To be sure, they introduced changes in the organization of the god's cult, as we see from their activities in connection with the burial places of the Osiris figurines at Karnak and elsewhere. Likewise, they sometimes sought to influence how rites were conducted and festivals celebrated. A good example of such intervention is the proclamation recorded in the Canopus Decree that obsequies for the deceased daughter of Ptolemy III should be incorporated in the Khoiak feast of Osiris.[293] Although presented as a decision made by a synod of priests, there can be little doubt that this was instigated by the king himself.[294] But where actual belief about Osiris was concerned the Ptolemies could change little. In this respect, as we have already seen, they were not very different from Egyptian rulers of earlier periods. According to one view, the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt did have an impact on some aspects of religious belief, not as actual agents of change, but by creating the preconditions under which change could take place, even though this may not have happened until long after their dynasty had disappeared.[295] As far as belief about Osiris is concerned, however, there is no evidence for even such indirect influence as this.

6.15. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, our attention was focused upon two questions. First, did the change to Greek rule in the fourth century BC, in particular, the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty, have an impact on Egyptian ideas about the afterlife, and second, did it have an impact on the way in which Egyptians conceptualized the relationship between Osiris and the deceased? In connection with the second question, we also investigated whether or not the rise to prominence of the god Sarapis under Ptolemaic sponsorship

[293] See S. Pfeiffer, *Das Dekret von Kanopos (238 v. Chr.)* (Munich and Leipzig, 2004), pp. 144–62 and 269–77; Yoyotte in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 36–7; Yoyotte in Goddio and Clauss (eds), *Egypt's Sunken Treasures*, pp. 178 and 195.

[294] It would be interesting to know whether the terms of this proclamation were actually observed by anyone, or whether they were ignored like Ptolemy's attempt to reform the Egyptian calendar outlined in the same decree (Pfeiffer, *Das Dekret von Kanopos (238 v. Chr.)*, pp. 131–44 and 249–57).

[295] Narerebout in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis*, p. 61.

influenced Egyptian perceptions of that relationship, since he was sometimes identified with Osiris.

To answer the first question, three categories of evidence were considered: conceptions of the hereafter in general, the actual texts that were used to benefit the deceased in the afterlife, and funerary art. Our investigation revealed that there was a significant degree of continuity in terms of conceptions of the afterlife between the Ptolemaic Period and those preceding it. Osiris, as ruler of the underworld, was still at the head of the hierarchy that the deceased aspired to join. All who died had to be judged in the tribunal of that god, and only those who were found to have been virtuous were accepted into his following. The wicked, by contrast, were consigned to punishment. Mummification continued to be important and the rites associated with it still retained their earlier significance. Nor was there any change in Egyptian conceptions of the *akh*, *ba*, and *ka*. These remained as they were before as well.

There was also a significant amount of continuity between the Ptolemaic Period and previous ones in terms of the texts employed to benefit the deceased in the afterlife. Several works composed prior to the rise of the Ptolemies continued in use after they gained control of Egypt, while newer compositions intended to revivify the dead and supply their posthumous needs frequently incorporated material from earlier periods. In a number of cases, these new works took one particular theme from an earlier work and developed it at greater length.

In the sphere of funerary art, we could identify some distinctive new features in the Ptolemaic Period. One is the increase in the number of what might be called more naturalistic depictions of the dead on items of burial equipment, especially in the later years of Ptolemaic rule. Some attribute these more naturalistic depictions to the influence of Greek artistic conventions. Even if they are correct, however, this need not mean that Greek conceptions of the afterlife were influencing traditional Egyptian ones. The evidence we examined showed that how an individual chose to be portrayed on items of burial equipment (or how relatives chose to have that individual portrayed) had nothing to do with his or her expectations for the next world. If they selected iconography that incorporated non-Egyptian artistic conventions or fashions of dress in preference to more traditional ones, this did not mean that they had abandoned indigenous beliefs about the afterlife in favour of foreign ones. Thus the adoption of new ways of representing things did not reflect a break in continuity with the past.

We also looked at some examples of Roman Period funerary art. These included depictions of Egyptian deities with non-Egyptian attributes, and decorative schemes combining Egyptian divinities shown in Egyptian style with Greek divinities shown in Greek style, either within the same scene or in two adjacent scenes juxtaposed with each other. Such combinations of Egyptian and Greek elements have their analogues in texts and burial assemblages from Roman Period Egypt as well. Examples like these demonstrate clearly that some intermingling of Greek and Egyptian ideas about the afterlife took place at this time, with Greeks borrowing ideas from Egyptians and vice versa. But in view of the late date of the evidence for this type of borrowing, it cannot be connected with the rise of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

Broadly speaking, there are two different strategies for investigating continuity and change in a society's religious beliefs and practices. One is to look at evidence from a wide range of different time periods, to see what is universal or constant and what is not. The other is to focus more narrowly upon evidence from two consecutive phases of a society's history, to ascertain the extent to which beliefs and practices were carried over from one to another. The evidence considered in the first part of this chapter showed that Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife in the Ptolemaic Period include many features which can be described as universal or constant, since they are attested in nearly all periods of Egyptian history. It also revealed that there was little change, if any, in conceptions of the afterlife between the Ptolemaic Period and the one immediately preceding it, the Late Period. This provides us with the answer to the first of the two questions selected for investigation in the present chapter. As far as one can judge from the textual, representational, and archaeological evidence, the change to Greek rule near the end of the fourth century did not have a significant impact on Egyptian ideas about the afterlife.

Did this change have an impact on conceptions of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased? Our investigation showed that it did not. Some have argued that the Egyptian conception of the deceased individual and that person's relation to Osiris did undergo a substantial alteration around the time of the Macedonian conquest. The chief piece of evidence cited by proponents of such a view is the locution *Wsỉr n* NN, 'Osiris of NN', a variant form of the more common locution *Wsỉr* NN, conventionally translated 'Osiris NN', which was used to designate the deceased. Since the first instances of this variant form to come to scholarly attention were found in texts dating to the Graeco-Roman Period, it was assumed that it must be a development specific to that time, which reflected Greek influence on Egyptian religion. But this view is easily disproved, since the locution *Wsỉr n* NN was in use long before the Greeks began arriving in Egypt. It is already attested in the Coffin Texts. Thus it is not an innovation of the Graeco-Roman Period, and was not influenced in any way by Greek thought.

The evidence showed that *Wsỉr n* NN and *Wsỉr* NN are simply alternative ways of expressing the same thing; both have to be translated 'Osiris of NN'. One employs the indirect genitive, a possessive construction in which the Egyptian word corresponding to 'of' is actually written out. The other uses the direct genitive, in which it is omitted and the terms denoting the thing possessed and its possessor are simply juxtaposed. At all times, therefore, the Egyptians referred to the deceased as 'Osiris of NN' when they wished to foreground their relationship to the god of the dead. The Osiris of a deceased person was the form that an individual acquired as a result of the rites of mummification and justification. This form was the outward mark of a person's status as a member of the community comprising Osiris's worshippers. Having acquired it, the deceased enjoyed not only the benefits of bodily rejuvenation, but also the fruits of a relationship with a specific deity which simultaneously situated them within a group.

The locution 'Osiris of NN', whether written with or without the genitival adjective *n*, did undergo a certain amount of change and development during the period under consideration. First, the range of different contexts in which it could be employed grew

wider. Second, the locution itself was occasionally expanded by the addition of other elements, giving rise to longer compounds like 'Osiris-Sokar the great god and lord of Abydos of NN', although these are more characteristic of the Roman Period than they are of the Ptolemaic. Some of these longer compounds, e.g. 'Osiris Khentiamentiu of NN', are attested in pre-Ptolemaic sources as well.

The initial element in the locution 'Osiris of NN' could also be replaced altogether. Deceased women could be referred to as 'Hathor of NN'. Since the first examples of that locution to come to scholarly attention were found in texts dating to the Graeco-Roman Period, this was assumed to have been a development specific to that time as well, with some claiming that its introduction was the result of Greek influence. But this is now known not to be the case, since an example where a woman is designated as 'Hathor of NN' occurs in the text on a statue dating to the reign of Osorkon III of the twenty-third dynasty. Thus the locution was in use long before the first Greeks arrived in Egypt.

The locution 'Hathor of NN' highlighted the status of women as devotees of the goddess Hathor in the afterlife. The 'Hathor' of a deceased woman was the Hathorian form that she acquired in the next world. Like the 'Osiris' of an individual, this was conferred by ritual means during the mummification ceremonies and constituted an outward sign, a visible mark, of her status as a follower or adherent of the goddess. The use of this locution reflects a propensity for using gender as a basis for classification and association: males are identified as followers of a male deity and females as followers of a female deity. This practice had a long history in Egypt, and can be paralleled in numerous Egyptian sources of earlier date.

The introduction of the locution 'Hathor of NN' did not mean that women ceased to be designated as 'Osiris of NN'. Like men, they could still be called this until belief in the Osirian afterlife came to an end. Rather, the two locutions were employed concurrently. A few texts refer to their female beneficiaries as 'Osiris of NN' in some passages and 'Hathor of NN' in others. Deceased women could also be referred to with a compound designation, 'Osiris Hathor of NN'. Such compound designations do not imply that there was a syncretism involving Osiris and Hathor. Rather, they are a concise means of marking the deceased's cultic affiliation with both deities. How a woman was designated in a particular text or text passage depended upon which of her affiliations the writer wished to foreground. Once again, there are precedents in sources of earlier date.

Although the locution 'Osiris of NN' underwent various developments over time, including expansion and even replacement by other locutions in certain contexts, none of these constitutes evidence of a change in the Egyptian conception of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased in the Ptolemaic Period. Both expansion and substitution of the original locution by others were already happening before that time. Some variants of it found in texts of the Ptolemaic Period that have been identified as innovations are actually attested much earlier. Others are simply new ways of expressing older ideas or concepts. Even where fresh developments can be discerned, these are not due to a sudden break. Rather they are part of a longer process of evolution which began centuries before. Nor did this stop when the rule of the Ptolemies came to an

end. The locution 'Osiris of NN' underwent further development in the Roman Period as well, although once again without losing its basic meaning. All such developments were part of a single continuum, which was unaffected by changes in rulers.

Did the rise to prominence of the god Sarapis under Ptolemaic sponsorship influence Egyptian perceptions of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased? Once again, our investigation showed that it did not. The earliest evidence for the identification of Sarapis and Osiris dates to the reign of Ptolemy III. The particular form of Osiris with which the Greek god was identified was Osiris-Apis, one of the chief deities of the Memphite necropolis (to be distinguished from the deceased Apis bull, with whom he is sometimes confused by both ancient and modern writers). This identification was more current among Greeks than among Egyptians, but there are clear examples where Egyptian texts use the divine name Osiris-Apis to refer to Sarapis, generally in 'official' contexts where the god was associated with the king and queen. In addition to Osiris-Apis, Sarapis could be identified with other forms of Osiris as well.

Most of our evidence for the identification of Sarapis with Osiris in Egyptian or bilingual sources dates to the middle or end of the Ptolemaic Period rather than the beginning. In fact, there is more evidence for it in the Roman Period than there is in the Ptolemaic. This suggests that the cult of Sarapis took quite a long time to spread among the Egyptian population and did so only gradually, an idea which is supported by the evidence of personal names incorporating that of the god. These are far more common in the Roman Period than they are in the Ptolemaic, reaching a peak in the second and third centuries AD. There are actually more individuals with Sarapis-related names attested in sources of the seventh century AD, by which time Christianity had long since supplanted the cults of Sarapis and his fellow deities in Egypt, than there are in those of the third century BC when, according to some authorities, the Ptolemies were most actively engaged in propagating his cult.

Although the identification of Sarapis with Osiris is already attested in Ptolemaic sources, it is not until the Roman Period that Sarapis as an alternative name for Osiris starts to appear in texts relating to the afterlife. Only then do we have written sources that record what the deceased hoped or expected Osiris would do for them in this form, and these are relatively few in number. In such sources, there is an emphasis upon the god as a ruler, a saviour, an arbiter of conflicts who punishes enemies. We no longer see a passive Osiris who needs to be protected from danger by others, but an active god, a king who is expected to hear the pleas of his subjects and exert himself on their behalf. Since Sarapis is himself a royal god, sometimes explicitly designated as a saviour, it is legitimate to ask whether this image of Osiris and what he is expected to do for the deceased has been influenced in any way by his association with that deity.

Our investigation showed that this was not the case. In fact, there are good Egyptian antecedents for the image of Osiris as a powerful ruler who defends the interests of his subjects. This image actually arose earlier in the first millennium BC, in the centuries preceding the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty, although its roots extend back to the Old Kingdom, long before the arrival of the first Greeks in Egypt. Thus it cannot be ascribed to foreign influence or explained as a development of the Ptolemaic Period.

The evidence indicates that what really happened was not that in the Ptolemaic Period Osiris was identified with Sarapis and acquired new powers and attributes as a result. It was rather that the new image of Osiris which arose earlier in the first millennium BC, itself building upon older ideas, in conjunction with the powers and attributes that were ascribed to him then, facilitated and led to his identification with Sarapis in the Ptolemaic Period. Thus, the rise to prominence of the latter god did not influence Egyptian perceptions of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased. To the extent that these appear to be different in the Graeco-Roman Period to what we find in earlier periods of Egyptian history, the difference is the result of a purely internal development, which began long before the Ptolemies arrived in Egypt.

The case of Sarapis and Osiris provides us with a further opportunity to assess the power of kings to influence developments in the sphere of religious belief. As far as one can judge from the available evidence, the elevation of Sarapis to the status of state deity under Ptolemaic sponsorship did not have a significant impact, within Egypt at least, outside court and official circles. The same applies to his identification with Osiris. We have little evidence for a sustained effort on the part of the state to persuade people to adopt this idea. If there was such an effort, it can hardly be termed a success. To be sure, the Ptolemies fostered a relationship between Sarapis and Osiris as symbols of kingship. In doing so, they exploited this for political purposes, using it to enhance the prestige of their family line by association with those two royal deities. But this did not constitute a religious change. Egyptian rulers had already sought to legitimize themselves by association with their divine counterparts for centuries previously. Thus the Ptolemies were simply continuing an indigenous tradition of long standing.[296]

We concluded from our investigation that the ability of the Ptolemies to influence what people actually believed about Osiris was limited. They may have introduced changes in the organization of the god's cult, and sought to influence how Osirian rites were conducted, but where actual belief about Osiris was concerned, especially ideas concerning his relationship with the deceased, they could change little, at least directly. In this respect, they were not very different from Egyptian rulers of earlier periods. This confirms the impression we have already gained in previous chapters about the limitations of royal power as far as influencing what happened in the sphere of belief about the afterlife is concerned.

Our investigations in this chapter highlighted three points which are worth emphasizing again here. The first is that anyone who seeks to trace changes in Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife in the Graeco-Roman Period cannot study the evidence of that period in isolation. It has to be viewed in conjunction with that of earlier periods as well. Otherwise, one might overlook important connections between the two, or precedents for what appear to be new ideas in sources of much greater antiquity.[297]

[296] For other areas, e.g. administration, in which the Ptolemies followed the same policy, see last two references cited in note 3.

[297] For additional examples of overlooked Pharaonic precedents for what have been identified as religious innovations of the Graeco-Roman Period, see A. von Lieven, *Grundriss des Laufes der Sterne:*

The second point is the arbitrary nature of the distinction often made by Egyptologists between the Graeco-Roman Period and earlier periods of Egyptian history when studying Egyptian religion.[298] Political change need not entail religious change. As we saw, there is actually a great deal of continuity between the Ptolemaic Period and earlier ones, particularly in the sphere of beliefs and practices pertaining to the afterlife.

The third and final point is that this arbitrary distinction creates the spurious impression that the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods were themselves a unity, when in fact there were some significant differences between them.[299] These include not only political, social, and economic differences, but religious ones as well, as our investigations revealed. One of the main differences between the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, as far as conceptions of the afterlife are concerned, is that traditional Egyptian beliefs about Osiris and his relationship with the deceased flourished in full vigour throughout the former, whereas at some point in the latter they died out. How and in what circumstances this happened will be the subject of the next chapter.

Das sogenannte Nutbuch (Copenhagen, 2007), p. 224 (divination texts); J. Quack, 'Zum ägyptischen Ritual im Iseum Campense in Rom', in C. Metzner-Nebelsick (ed.), *Rituale in der Vorgeschichte, Antike und Gegenwart* (Rahden, 2003), pp. 61–2, and D. Delia, 'The Refreshing Water of Osiris', *JARCE* 29 (1992), pp. 181–90 (Osiris *Hydreios*).

[298] See, for example, F. Dunand and C. Zivie-Coche, *Hommes et dieux en Égypte* (Paris, 2006), where religion in Pharaonic Egypt and religion in Graeco-Roman Egypt are treated in two separate sections, each written by a different author.

[299] See N. Lewis, 'Greco-Roman Egypt: Fact or Fiction?', in D. Samuel (ed.) *Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of Papyrology* (Toronto, 1970), pp. 3–14; A. Monson, *From the Ptolemies to the Romans: Political and Economic Change in Egypt* (Cambridge, 2012), especially pp. 282–9.

7

Where is the King of the Two Lands? The End of Belief in the Osirian Afterlife

In the previous chapter, we considered the problem of whether a religious change instigated by a particular king or kings could influence what ordinary Egyptians actually believed. We saw that, in the case of the god Sarapis, the answer was negative. As far as one can judge from the available evidence, the elevation of Sarapis to the status of state deity under Ptolemaic sponsorship did not have a significant impact, within Egypt at least, outside court and official circles. The same applies to his identification with Osiris. Our evidence for this in Egyptian or bilingual sources is limited, and most of it dates to the middle or end of the Ptolemaic Period rather than the beginning. In fact, there is more evidence for it in the Roman Period than there is in the Ptolemaic. This indicates that the cult of Sarapis and ideas associating him with Osiris took quite a long time to spread among the Egyptian population and did so only gradually. Hence the ability of the Ptolemaic rulers to influence religious belief was restricted, at least in this instance.

We also looked at some of the problems that arise when one treats the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods as a unity. In fact, there were some significant differences between them. These include not only political, social, and economic differences, but religious ones as well. As we saw, one of the main differences between the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, as far as conceptions of the afterlife are concerned, is that traditional Egyptian beliefs about Osiris and his relationship with the deceased flourished in full vigour throughout the former, whereas at some point in the latter they died out. How did this happen and when? Did the state play any part in their disappearance? These are the questions that we will investigate in the present chapter.

It is important to study the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife in the context of the end of traditional Egyptian religion as a whole, but we should not assume that the two are identical, since not all features of traditional Egyptian religion disappeared at the same time. Some continued in existence longer than others. Equally, we should separate belief in Osiris himself from belief in the Osirian afterlife. It is possible that the former could have persisted after the latter had died out. As we have seen in previous chapters, the Egyptians' conception of Osiris underwent a process of gradual development, in the course of which he acquired new attributes and roles that he did not possess at the outset. Therefore we should at least allow for the possibility that he

may have lost some of these before others, including his role as god of the dead. It is also important to take into consideration, not only evidence for the continuation of the cult of Osiris in temples, but that for veneration of the god outside institutional contexts as well.[1]

Broadly speaking, there are two models for the end of traditional Egyptian religion.[2] One is what might be termed the conflict and triumph model. The other can be designated as the gradual disappearance model. The first assumes that traditional Egyptian religion continued to flourish up until the time when Christianity spread throughout the country and that there was a violent clash between the two belief systems, which Christianity won. As a result, temples and other venues for cultic activity were destroyed or converted into churches. The second model presupposes that traditional Egyptian religion was already in decline well before the rise of Christianity. Temples fell out of use gradually over a period of time. Some may have been abandoned or stood empty for a while before Christianity became dominant. Re-use or destruction of temples, where this occurred, was not necessarily motivated by religious feelings. Some temples were converted to secular purposes or exploited as sources of building material.

Proponents of the first model rely heavily upon literary sources, often of a highly tendentious nature, and mostly written later than the period that they purport to describe, as evidence to support their view.[3] Proponents of the second model, by contrast, give more weight to contemporary documentary and archaeological evidence.[4] Studying the end of the Osirian afterlife gives us the opportunity to assess these two models and ask which provides a more cogent explanation of that phenomenon. In order to do this, however, we will also need to assess the evidence cited in support of each model, to determine which is the more reliable.

In this chapter, we will focus upon the evidence relating to the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife in four different places. There are two reasons for doing this. The first is a practical one. It would require too much space to investigate the phenomenon in every part of Egypt. Nor has sufficient data been preserved to permit us to do so. The

[1] Cf. L. Medini, 'Chronique d'une mort annoncée? Le crépuscule des temples et des païens d'Égypte', *Topoi* 20 (2016), pp. 241–3 and 260–4.

[2] Cf. S. Emmel, U. Gotter, and J. Hahn, '"From Temple to Church": Analysing a Late Antique Phenomenon of Transformation', in J. Hahn, S. Emmel, and U. Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden and Boston, 2008), pp. 1–22; R. Bagnall, 'Models and Evidence in the Study of Religion in Late Roman Egypt', ibid., pp. 23–41; J. Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion: A Regional Study of Religious Transformation (298–642 CE)* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2008), pp. 86–94; J. Dijkstra, 'The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt', in L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'* (Leiden and Boston, 2011), pp. 389–436; Medini, *Topoi* 20 (2016), pp. 239–80, all with references to earlier literature.

[3] See, for example, D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, 1998). Compare M. Stadler, *Einführung in die ägyptische Religion ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit nach den demotischen religiösen Texten* (Berlin, 2012), pp. 188–96.

[4] See the article by Bagnall cited in note 2.

second reason is that it is very important to pay careful attention to local and regional developments. We should not assume that belief in the Osirian afterlife disappeared at the same time in every part of the country. It may have survived longer in some places than in others. Each city or town had its own distinctive local pattern of religious development that could have had a bearing upon this. In keeping with the emphasis of this book on problems, the four places selected for investigation here are all sites from which abundant evidence pertaining to the cult of Osiris has been recovered, and this evidence has aroused considerable discussion as well. Thus they are well suited for use as case studies.

An investigation of this sort is subject to certain limitations. First, we must acknowledge that it is impossible to establish with certainty when belief in the Osirian afterlife came to an end in a particular place. The most that we can do is to determine when the evidence for it comes to an end. It remains possible that the belief itself persisted even longer, but we cannot track it in the historical record. Second, evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife is just that. It tells us that the belief in question existed in a particular place at a particular time. It does not tell us, however, how widespread that belief was or what proportion of the population in a given area held it. It is important to bear this in mind as we turn to the first of the places selected for our enquiry.

7.1. AKHMIM AND ITS ENVIRONS

Akhmim (Egyptian *Ḫnt-Mnw*, Coptic ⲱⲙⲓⲛ, Greek *Πανῶν πόλις*) is the modern Arabic name of the ancient capital of the ninth Upper Egyptian nome.[5] The city was already a significant regional centre in the Old Kingdom,[6] and retained its importance into the period now under consideration. In our investigation of it, it is important to take into account not just Akhmim itself but the area around it as well: the east side of the river, which was dominated by the metropolis, and the west side, with its own distinct cluster of villages, sanctuaries, and cemeteries.[7]

[5] For good introductions to Akhmim and the region around it, see K. Kuhlmann, *Materialien zur Archäologie und Geschichte des Raumes von Achmim* (Mainz am Rhein, 1983); L. Cavero, *Poems in Context: Greek Poetry in the Egyptian Thebaid 200–600 AD* (Berlin and New York, 2008), pp. 198–210. The various names of the city are discussed ibid., p. 198, and in Kuhlmann, *Materialien zur Archäologie und Geschichte des Raumes von Achmim*, pp. 9–13.

[6] N. Kanawati, *Akhmim in the Old Kingdom* 1 (Sydney, 1992).

[7] See M. Chauveau, 'Rive droite, rive gauche: Le nome panopolite au IIe et IIIe siècles du notre ère', in A. Egberts, B. Muhs, and J. van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 45–54.

7.1.1. Local forms of traditional Egyptian religion in Akhmim and its environs

We have an abundance of evidence for cult and belief at Akhmim during the Graeco-Roman Period.[8] This comprises temples, tombs, both inscribed and uninscribed, burial places for humans as well as various animal and bird species, coffins, mummy cases and related objects, stelae, offering tables, papyri, ostraca, graffiti, mummy labels, and inscribed linen bandages. Some of these objects are more characteristic of one part of the Akhmim region than another. Most inscribed hieroglyphic stelae, for instance, originate from el-Hawawish and other cemeteries on the east side of the river. Conversely, mummy labels appear to be unique to the west side. All emanate from a single site, the necropolis of Atripe, or Triphion, not far from the present village of Wannina.[9]

The preserved evidence for Egyptian religious activity in the Akhmim region at this time reveals a vibrant, colourful, and above all, highly distinctive picture. The chief deities were the god Min (or Min-Re) on the east bank of the river and the goddess Triphis on the west.[10] Other special divinities worshipped include the child god Kolanthes,[11] the goddess Aperet-set, often associated with Triphis,[12] and two particular forms of Horus: Horus who pleases the heart[13] and Horus the great, lord of Letopolis.[14] The latter was especially venerated in the village of Edfa on the west side of the river.[15] Yet another form of Horus, Horus pillar of his mother, had a cult there as well.[16] The village of Bompae on the west bank was notable for the veneration of Harudja, a deified human being.[17] Near Atripe, on the same side of the river, there was a sanctuary dedicated to Asklepios where incubation of the sick was practised.[18]

[8] For the description that follows, see M. Smith, 'Aspects of the Preservation and Transmission of Indigenous Religious Traditions in Akhmim and its Environs during the Graeco-Roman Period', in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, pp. 234–43.

[9] Ibid., p. 235.

[10] See U. Rössler-Köhler, 'Repit', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 5 (Wiesbaden, 1984), pp. 236–42; C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 4 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), pp. 662–3.

[11] J. Quaegebeur, 'Kolanthes', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 3 (Wiesbaden, 1980), pp. 671–2; C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 7 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), p. 222.

[12] E. Feucht, 'Aperetiset', in W. Helck and E. Otto (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1975), pp. 335–6; C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 2 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), pp. 105–6.

[13] A. Scharff, 'Ein Denkstein der römischen Kaiserzeit aus Achmim', *ZÄS* 62 (1927), pp. 89–90.

[14] Ibid., p. 90.

[15] M. Chauveau, 'Les cultes d'Edfa à l'époque romaine', *RdE* 37 (1986), pp. 42–3.

[16] Ibid., pp. 34–6 and 42.

[17] M. Chauveau, 'Autour des étiquettes de momies de la Bibliothèque nationale de Vienne', *BIFAO* 92 (1992), pp. 106–7.

[18] R. El-Farag, U. Kaplony-Heckel, and K. Kuhlmann, 'Recent Archaeological Explorations at Athribis (*Ḥw.t Rpjj.t*)', *MDAIK* 41 (1985), pp. 1–4 and plates 7–8.

Veneration of sacred animals was also very important in this area during the Graeco-Roman Period, as we know from the discoveries of a number of cemeteries of mummified jackals, cats, baboons, ibises, falcons, and other creatures, including insects.[19] The house of life in the temple of Min at Akhmim continued to function, and it was there that the priests and scribes preserved and transmitted information about local religious traditions.[20] More than one source specifically attributes these functions to priests of the god Thoth, who are described as 'those who know the forms of the ancestors' and 'scribes, wise men, who enter the library, servants of Thoth, the staff of the house of life'.[21]

To judge from the surviving evidence, another important activity in the region around Akhmim was the study and interpretation of astral phenomena. More representations of the zodiac are known from this area than from any other part of Egypt, a total of eleven altogether.[22] There was one, no longer extant, in the temple of Min at Akhmim itself.[23] Six zodiacs are preserved on the ceilings of tombs at the cemetery of el-Salamuni northeast of that city. Accounts of earlier travellers indicate that there were at least two further representations in tombs there which have been destroyed.[24] Another pair of zodiacs is preserved across the river, in conjunction with horoscopes, on the ceiling of the famous zodiac tomb at Atripe.[25] Thus the pervasiveness of this sort of interest is attested by state as well as private monuments on both sides of the river. But zodiacs do not exhaust our evidence for the importance of the study of the stars in the Akhmim region during the Graeco-Roman Period. Not far from the so-called zodiac tomb is another one with a further pair of astronomical representations, which was constructed for a man called Psen-osiris.[26] In addition, a number of demotic ostraca were found at Atripe including astronomical ones with entries of stars.[27]

[19] For a list of animal cemeteries discovered in the Akhmim region, see D. Kessler, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1989), pp. 21–2.

[20] See K. Nordh, *Aspects of Ancient Egyptian Curses and Blessings: Conceptual Background and Transmission* (Uppsala, 1996), pp. 194–5.

[21] See M.-Th. Derchain-Urtel, 'Thot à Akhmim', in *Hommages à François Daumas* (Montpellier, 1986), pp. 173–80; K. Jansen-Winkeln, 'Die Hildesheimer Stele der Chereduanch', *MDAIK* 53 (1997), pp. 93–4.

[22] For the zodiac and astrology in Graeco-Roman Egypt, see B. Bohleke, 'In Terms of Fate: A Survey of the Indigenous Egyptian Contribution to Ancient Astrology in Light of P. CtYBR inv. 1132(B)', *SAK* 23 (1996), pp. 11–46; A. von Lieven, 'Divination in Ägypten', *Altorientalische Forschungen* 26 (1999), pp. 99–105.

[23] O. Neugebauer and R. Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts* 3 (Providence and London, 1969), pp. 86–9.

[24] Ibid., pp. 98–100. [25] Ibid., pp. 96–8.

[26] See El-Farag, Kaplony-Heckel, and Kuhlmann, *MDAIK* 41 (1985), p. 8; Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts* 3, pp. 75–7.

[27] W.M.F. Petrie, *Athribis* (London, 1908), p. 11.

7.1.2. Evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife in the Akhmim region

Our evidence for beliefs about the afterlife in this region comes chiefly from inscribed tombs and objects deposited in them.[28] A number of important Book of the Dead manuscripts are of Akhmimic provenience.[29] The area around Akhmim is also notable for the number of important demotic texts for the afterlife that have been found there. These include the mortuary liturgies preserved in P. BM 10507,[30] at least one copy of the Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing (P. Louvre E 10607), and possibly others as well,[31] and a long manuscript now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, Bodl. MS. Egypt. a. 3(P), which preserves a version of Spells 25 and 32 of the Pyramid Texts, a copy of the work known as the Spell for Presenting Offerings to Spirits, and other compositions.[32] It is not clear whether these papyri were discovered on the east or the west side of the river. None is later than the first century BC, or possibly the early part of the first century AD. They show that belief in the Osirian afterlife was certainly flourishing then.

Large numbers of funerary stelae, hieroglyphic and demotic, have been discovered in the Akhmim region as well.[33] As noted in section 7.1.1, the former come mainly from cemeteries on the east side of the river. In particular, they originate from Maspero's excavations at el-Hawawish between 1884 and 1888.[34] Little is known about the precise archaeological context in which these stelae were found. Kuhlmann thinks that they probably come from the tomb shaft or burial chamber.[35] The demotic stelae, to judge from the deities and cults mentioned on them, probably originate from the east side of

[28] For a preliminary survey of this material, see M. Depauw, 'The Late Funerary Material from Akhmim', in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, pp. 71–81. Inscribed objects from this region can now be traced via the Trismegistos database (http://www.trismegistos.org/index.html).

[29] See the online database of the Bonn Book of the Dead project (http://www.totenbuch-projekt.uni-bonn.de/). On the date of these manuscripts, see M. Mosher, *The Papyrus of Hor (BM EA 10479)* (London, 2001), pp. 31–6; M. Mosher, 'The Book of the Dead Tradition at Akhmim During the Late Period', in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, pp. 201–9.

[30] M. Smith, *The Mortuary Texts of Papyrus BM 10507* (London, 1987); M. Smith, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 245–63.

[31] M. Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 4–5 and plate 7; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 349, 367, and 373–7.

[32] Ibid., pp. 650–62; M. Smith, 'Bodl. MS. Egypt. a. 3(P) and the Interface Between Temple Cult and Cult of the Dead', in J. Quack (ed.), *Ägyptische Rituale der griechisch-römischen Zeit* (Tübingen, 2014), pp. 145–55.

[33] These can be traced via the Trismegistos database (see second reference in note 28). For a representative sample of hieroglyphic stelae, see M.-Th. Derchain-Urtel, *Priester im Tempel: Die Rezeption der Theologie der Tempel von Edfu und Dendera in den Privatdokumenten aus ptolemäischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1989), pp. 61–92 and 96–9, with review by A. Egberts in *BiOr* 51 (1994), pp. 536–44. For specimens of demotic stelae, see W. Spiegelberg, *CGC: Die demotischen Inschriften* (Leipzig, 1904), nos. 22074, 31095, 31109, and 31155. A. Farid, *Fünf demotische Stelen* (Berlin, 1995), pp. 245–66, gives a list of published demotic funerary stelae.

[34] See Smith in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, p. 235.

[35] Kuhlmann, *Materialien zur Archäologie und Geschichte des Raumes von Achmim*, p. 58 note 292.

the river as well, although it is not always possible to be more specific than this.[36] These provide additional evidence of continued belief in Osiris as god of the afterlife. However, very few can be dated later than the end of the first century AD. A notable exception is Stela Berlin inv. 22489, which was inscribed in the reign of Hadrian (AD 117–138).[37]

A distinctive group of painted mummy cases, some of them bearing short inscriptions that attest to belief in Osiris, was produced in the Akhmim region. Once these were thought to date from the second century AD, but it has been shown, on the basis of palaeography, that these are not later than the initial part of the first century AD, and possibly even as early as the first century BC.[38] There are some notable decorated tombs in this region as well, which also attest to belief in the Osirian afterlife. These include the so-called 'Tomb of 1897' at el-Salamuni,[39] the zodiac tomb at Atripe to which reference has already been made in section 7.1.1, and the nearby tomb of Psenosiris, which has elaborate decoration in sunk relief and long hieroglyphic inscriptions.[40] The first of these tombs has been dated to the second century AD, although it could be slightly earlier.[41] The horoscopes in the second were cast in AD 141 and 148, suggesting a probable date for the tomb and its decoration in the late second century AD,[42] and the third has been assigned to the late Ptolemaic Period or early Roman Period.[43]

7.1.3. The latest evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife: mummy labels of the second and third centuries AD

The only evidence that we have for belief in the Osirian afterlife in the Akhmim region after the second century AD comes from mummy labels. Some of these are inscribed in Greek, some in demotic, and some are bilingual, with a Greek text on one side and a demotic text on the other. A small number of mummy labels are inscribed in hieratic or

[36] For an example of a demotic stela that comes from the village of *Pr-swn* on the west side of the river, see J. Malek and M. Smith, 'Henry Salt's Egyptian Copies and Drawings', *Göttinger Miszellen* 64 (1983), pp. 48–9.

[37] See Scharff, *ZÄS* 62 (1927), pp. 86–107; P. Derchain, *Le dernier obélisque* (Brussels, 1987), pp. 51–6.

[38] See M. Smith, 'Dating Anthropoid Mummy Cases from Akhmim: The Evidence of the Demotic Inscriptions', in M. Bierbrier (ed.), *Portraits and Masks: Burial Customs in Roman Egypt* (London, 1997), pp. 66–71. The mummy cases in question are discussed in section 6.4.1 as well.

[39] Kuhlmann, *Materialien zur Archäologie und Geschichte des Raumes von Achmim*, p. 73. Cf. D. Klotz, 'The Lecherous Pseudo-Anubis of Josephus and the "Tomb of 1897" at Akhmim', in A. Gasse, F. Servajean, and C. Thiers (eds), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum: Recueil d'études dédiées à Jean-Claude Grenier* 2 (Montpellier, 2012), pp. 385–8; M. Venit, 'Referencing Isis in Tombs of Graeco-Roman Egypt: Tradition and Innovation', in L. Bricault and M. Versluys (eds), *Isis on the Nile: Egyptian Gods in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Leiden and Boston, 2010), pp. 98–107 and 113–19.

[40] El-Farag, Kaplony-Heckel, and Kuhlmann, *MDAIK* 41 (1985), pp. 4–8 and plates 9–17.

[41] For varying estimates of its date, see Venit in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Isis on the Nile*, p. 101; C. Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt: Art, Identity, and Funerary Religion* (Oxford, 2005), p. 165; Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts* 3, pp. 98–9.

[42] Ibid., pp. 96–8.

[43] Ibid., p. 75; El-Farag, Kaplony-Heckel, and Kuhlmann, *MDAIK* 41 (1985), pp. 5–6.

hieroglyphs. All those written in Egyptian originate from the west side of the river, specifically from the necropolis of Triphion, although the individuals for whom they were written came from a range of local places.[44]

The majority of these mummy labels date to the second and the third centuries AD, with most of them produced during the latter. The earliest precisely dated label from the Akhmim region was written in year 13 of the reign of Domitian, 7 December AD 93.[45] The latest precisely dated mummy label that tells us anything about the afterlife beliefs of its owner was written in year 15 of Gallienus, 24 February AD 268.[46] This label is bilingual. The demotic text requests that the *ba* of the person for whom it was written live in the presence of Osiris-Sokar the great god and lord of Abydos. Another bilingual label from year 4 of Aurelian is slightly later. This was written on 4 September 272, but only gives the name, parentage, age, and date of death of its beneficiary.[47] Both the woman for whom the label was written and her mother have names which incorporate that of Osiris, but this may no longer be a reliable indicator of religious affiliation.[48] The woman in question was 40 years old when she died.

Chauveau has cited two Greek mummy labels which are even later than those just mentioned. One is dated in year 2 of Probus (= AD 276–7), the other in year 5 of Diocletian (= AD 288–9), but again there are no religious formulas to inform us about what their beneficiaries hoped would happen to them after they died.[49] It is worth noting that Christians were sometimes provided with mummy labels, so the fact that an individual was buried with an object of this type is not always a reliable indicator of his or her religious affiliation.[50] Vleeming has drawn attention to a label which could be as late as AD 302 if the reading 'year 19' (scil. of Diocletian) is correct.[51] The texts on both sides are in the Greek language, but that on one side is written in demotic characters. Here too, there is no formula, although the use of the demotic script makes it unlikely that the owner was a Christian.

The religious formulas that occur most frequently in mummy labels of the third century AD from the Akhmim region request that the *ba* of the dead person might serve Osiris or, more often, Osiris-Sokar, or that it might live in the presence

[44] For mummy labels from the Akhmim region, see S. Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2011), pp. 127–525.

[45] Ibid., p. 810; M. Chauveau, *Les étiquettes de momies démotiques et bilingues du Musée du Louvre* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Paris III, 1987), pp. 216 and 280.

[46] Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, p. 476, no. 846.

[47] See Chauveau, *Les étiquettes de momies démotiques et bilingues du Musée du Louvre*, pp. 111 and 282.

[48] See P. van Minnen, 'The Letter (and Other Papers) of Ammon: Panopolis in the Fourth Century AD', in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, pp. 179–80 note 16.

[49] Chauveau, *Les étiquettes de momies démotiques et bilingues du Musée du Louvre*, pp. 111 and 282.

[50] Cf. a mummy label from Thebes which was written for a certain Papnoute the son of Apa Jeremias, published in C. Schmidt, 'Ein altchristliches Mumienetikett, nebst Bemerkungen über das Begräbnißwesen der Kopten', *ZÄS* 32 (1894), p. 62.

[51] Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 518–19, no. 883.

of Osiris-Sokar. It is evident that Osiris and Osiris-Sokar are simply variant names for the same divinity. Occasionally it is asked that the name of the deceased endure or be rejuvenated before the god, or that the deceased be in his presence, or that his *ba* be praised or favoured in the presence of the deity.[52] The choice of formula varied with the predilection of the scribe. Two striking things to note in these formulas are the central role of the *ba* in the relationship between Osiris and the deceased (only rarely are the body or parts thereof mentioned) and the ubiquitous phrase 'in the presence of Osiris-Sokar'. The latter illustrates the continued importance of physical proximity to the god for his adherents.

7.1.4. Persistence of other forms of traditional Egyptian religion at Akhmim into the early fourth century AD

So mummy labels provide the latest evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife in the Akhmim region. But even this runs out after the third quarter of the third century AD. We should not imagine that polytheistic belief disappeared at that point, however. Greek documentary texts from Akhmim dating to the fourth century AD make reference to temples and priests and priestesses there.[53] A register of property in the city compiled in the early part of that century (P.Berlin.Bork.) lists sanctuaries of Egyptian gods like Amun and Khnum alongside those of Greek divinities like Persephone and the Agathos Daimon. A reference to a temple in a document of this date need not mean that it was still active.[54] However, the first of the sanctuaries just listed is described as 'the temple of Amun the great god', so we can be fairly confident that it was still functioning when the register was compiled. Adherents of these deities co-existed alongside at least one church and several deacons.[55] There was also a bishop of Akhmim from at least the beginning of the fourth century.[56]

A letter of early fourth-century date from Akhmim (P.Fouad 80) mentions a priestess attached to the Tripheion, in other words, the temple of the goddess Triphis at Atripe on the west side of the river.[57] A roll containing official correspondence (P.Panop.Beatty 1) gives instructions to prepare bedding for the Emperor Diocletian in

[52] See ibid., pp. 795–802.

[53] Van Minnen in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, p. 179.

[54] See M. Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri* (Turnhout, 2006), p. 73.

[55] See Z. Borkowski, *Une description topographique des immeubles à Panopolis* (Warsaw, 1975), p. 89. For Christians and pagans in fourth-century Akhmim, see also Cavero, *Poems in Context*, pp. 207–10. As Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri*, pp. 134 and 147–9, points out, relations between the two groups were not always as fraught as later literary sources would lead us to believe.

[56] Cavero, *Poems in Context*, p. 209.

[57] A. Bataille, O. Guéraud, P. Jouguet, N. Lewis, H. Marrou, J. Scherer, and W. Wassell, *Les papyrus Fouad I* (Cairo, 1939), pp. 163–7, especially p. 164, lines 14–15. For the possibility that the temple at Atripe was actually dedicated jointly to two deities, Triphis and Min-Re, see C. Leitz, 'Le temple de Ptolémée XII à Athribis—un temple pour Min(-Rê) ou pour Répit?', *BSFE* 172 (2008), pp. 32–52.

anticipation of his stay in the palace (παλάτιον) in the Tripheion in AD 298.[58] The fact that arrangements were made for the emperor to sleep in this temple has suggested to some that it might have been diverted from its original function for his benefit.[59] But there were palaces in some Egyptian temples of the Pharaonic Period as well, so this need not have been the case.[60] The instructions to make ready for Diocletian's visit were addressed to an official with the title 'superintendent of bedding in the Tripheion', which indicates that the temple staff had some prior experience in providing accommodation for visiting dignitaries.

These examples show that some traditional Egyptian cults in the Akhmim region continued in existence into the early fourth century AD. But the survival of belief in some traditional Egyptian deities does not have to entail the survival of all of them. It looks as if Osiris, in the area around Akhmim at least, was a casualty of the late third century AD. Since our evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife in that century comes exclusively from mummy labels originating on the west side of the river, does this mean that such belief persisted more tenaciously there than it did on the east side? Perhaps, but it is impossible to be certain on this point.

7.1.5. Evidence for the survival of traditional Egyptian religion in the Akhmim region in the writings of Shenoute?

The later fourth century and the fifth century bring us to the time of that archfoe of all non-Christian forms of religion, the archimandrite Shenoute of Atripe (*c.*347–465).[61] A lifelong resident of the Akhmim region, born and bred on the west bank, his writings and correspondence contain many references to and descriptions of the beliefs and practices of his local religious opponents. What is striking is the fact that, with a few odd exceptions, there is no trace in his accounts of the very distinctive features of traditional Egyptian cult and worship at Akhmim that we have outlined in the preceding sections.

In one of his works, Shenoute condemns the worship of falcons, serpents, crocodiles, and other creatures, down to and including the lowly fly.[62] As we have seen, animal cults were very important in the Akhmim region before his time, as witnessed by the numerous cemeteries discovered there preserving the mummified remains of diverse

[58] T.C. Skeat, *Papyri from Panopolis in the Chester Beatty Library Dublin* (Dublin, 1964), pp. 34–5.

[59] Cf. van Minnen in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, p. 179.

[60] See Medini, *Topoi* 20 (2016), pp. 257–8; D. Klotz, 'Triphis in the White Monastery: Reused Temple Blocks from Sohag', *Ancient Society* 40 (2010), pp. 206–7.

[61] On Shenoute and the religious conflicts in which he participated, see S. Emmel, 'From the Other Side of the Nile: Shenoute and Panopolis', in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, pp. 95–113; S. Emmel, 'Shenoute of Atripe and the Christian Destruction of Temples in Egypt: Rhetoric and Reality', in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, pp. 161–201.

[62] É. Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 2 (Paris, 1914), pp. 408–9. For other condemnations of animal worship, see É. Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 1 (Paris, 1907), pp. 379, 381, and 383.

species of fauna, including insects. Elsewhere, Shenoute denounces some local opponents of his as casters of horoscopes and astrologers.[63] It is tempting to see here a reflection of the well-documented interest in the study and interpretation of astral phenomena that we know from Akhmim and its environs in earlier periods. On the other hand, this sort of denunciation is commonplace in the writings of Christian polemicists (in the same sentence Shenoute brands his opponents as sorcerers, potion-mixers, and idol worshippers), so one may have here a rhetorical device rather than a literal description.

Apart from these examples, as van der Vliet has noted, there is very little in Shenoute's descriptions of the beliefs and practices of his religious opponents that could be called Egyptian at all.[64] When he cites their myths, these are invariably Greek rather than indigenous ones. Thus in one passage, he refers to 'Kronos who is called "the avenger"' and describes how he ensnared his parents when they were together and castrated his father with a sickle. He also relates how Kronos devoured the children he had begotten. As his source for information about the god's misdeeds, he cites the books of his opponents.[65] Although the epithet 'avenger' is attested for some Egyptian gods and demons,[66] Shenoute is clearly referring to the Titan of Greek mythology here, in view of the acts which he attributes to him. Thus there can be no question of *interpretatio graeca*.[67] The epithet 'avenger' is probably attached to Kronos here because the planet Saturn was sometimes identified as the star of Nemesis (*Νεμέσεως ἀστήρ*).[68] It follows that the books Shenoute cites must be works of Greek literature. That he was familiar with such works is demonstrated by the disparaging allusions that he makes later in the same passage to two plays of Aristophanes, the *Frogs* and the *Birds*.[69]

The polytheistic deities to whom Shenoute refers in his writings are always given Greek names, the Egyptian equivalents only being added as glosses, if at all. Thus in one text he mentions Rhea, Zeus, his son Ares who assumed the form of a wild boar to display his depravity, Hephaistos who is Ptah, and Apollo the vile harpist.[70] In another, he refers to Pan who is Min.[71] So even the god Min, once Akhmim's chief deity, seems to have been demoted

[63] J. Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia* 3 (Leipzig, 1908), p. 88.

[64] See J. van der Vliet, 'Spätantikes Heidentum in Ägypten im Spiegel der koptischen Literatur', in *Begegnung von Heidentum und Christentum im spätantiken Ägypten* (Riggisberg, 1993), pp. 99–130.

[65] Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 1, pp. 383–4.

[66] See Leitz, *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 7, p. 615; L. Kákosy, 'Probleme der Religion im römerzeitlichen Ägypten', in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 18.5 (Berlin and New York, 1995), pp. 2984–6; S. Hodjash and O. Berlev, *The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow* (Leningrad, 1982), p. 217.

[67] For attempts to identify Kronos with various Egyptian deities, see S. Aufrère, 'ϰρονος, un crocodile justicier des marécages de la rive occidentale du Panopolite au temps de Chénouté?', in S. Aufrère (ed.), *Encyclopédie religieuses de l'univers végétal: Croyances phytoreligieuses de l'Égypte ancienne* 3 (Montpellier, 2005), pp. 77–93.

[68] See R. Pettazzoni, 'Kronos in Egitto', in E. Breccia (ed.), *Studi in memoria di Ippolito Rosellini nel primo centenario della morte* 1 (Pisa, 1949), pp. 289–90.

[69] Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 1, p. 386. [70] Ibid., pp. 384–5.

[71] See S. Emmel, 'Ithyphallic Gods and Undetected Ligatures: Pan is not "Ours", he is Min (Rectification of a Misreading in a Work of Shenute)', *Göttinger Miszellen* 141 (1994), pp. 43–6.

in his eyes to a local form of a Greek god.[72] The one exception to this is the goddess Isis, since her cult had spread throughout the Mediterranean world, so that her name was equally familiar to Egyptians and non-Egyptians.[73] The fact that Shenoute occasionally glosses the Greek name of a deity with its Egyptian counterpart does not constitute evidence of familiarity with indigenous Egyptian religion on his part, since the Egyptian names were also transmitted in Greek literary sources and he could easily have learned them there.[74] As Cavero remarks, 'Classical culture was a part of the heritage of all learned men' at this time, irrespective of religious affiliation.[75] It is more likely that, in citing such names, he is asserting his mastery of the written culture of the well educated rather than demonstrating his knowledge of how those living around him referred to their gods.

Shenoute's description of the god Ares is of particular interest. According to one version of the myth of Adonis, Aphrodite conceived a passion for that youth. Ares, consumed by jealousy, transformed himself into a wild boar and killed Adonis by piercing his thigh with a tusk. This myth is recounted in the *Dionysiaca*, an epic written by the poet Nonnus, a native of Akhmim who was a contemporary of Shenoute. A hexameter paraphrase of the Gospel of John is sometimes attributed to him.[76] It is tempting to speculate that the archimandrite learned about the myth from reading Nonnus, since his poem utilizes the same variant of it (in which Ares assumes the form of a boar) that was known and alluded to by Shenoute.[77]

7.1.6. References to pagan temples in the writings of Shenoute

In a sermon on the Last Judgement, Shenoute relates the story of an encounter between himself and an unnamed pagan in 'the temple of Atripe'.[78] Since there was more than

[72] Emmel's explanation for Shenoute's use of the gloss in this passage (*Göttinger Miszellen* 141 [1994], p. 46) seems unnecessarily convoluted to me. If he glossed the Greek name in order to make it clear to the villagers he was addressing that he was referring specifically to an image of Min rather than Pan (Emmel's interpretation), why did he not simply use the Egyptian name in the first place?

[73] Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 2, pp. 407–8.

[74] The fact that Hephaistos is the Greek equivalent of Ptah is already recorded in Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, written at the end of the third century AD. See É. des Places, *Iamblique: Les mystères d'Égypte* (Paris, 1966), p. 197. For Min in Greek sources, see e.g. J.G. Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Cardiff, 1970), p. 208 (57, 374B). For an explanation of Plutarch's statement that the name of the god means 'that which is seen', see M. Smith, 'On Some Orthographies of the Verbs *Mȝ*, "See", and *Mn*, "Endure", in Demotic and Other Egyptian Texts', in H.-J. Thissen and K.-Th. Zauzich (eds), *Grammata Demotika: Festschrift für Erich Lüddeckens zum 15. Juni 1983* (Würzburg, 1984), pp. 199–200 and 203–4. As this example shows, one could obtain even fairly recondite information about the names of Egyptian gods without coming into direct contact with their worshippers.

[75] Cavero, *Poems in Context*, p. 195.

[76] See S. Fornaro, 'Nonnus', in H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds), *Brill's New Pauly* 9 (Leiden and Boston, 2006), pp. 812–15; Cavero, *Poems in Context*, pp. 15–25.

[77] See W. Rouse, *Nonnos Dionysiaca* 2 (London and Cambridge, 1940), pp. 378 (29.135–8) and 460 (32.219–20); W. Rouse, *Nonnos Dionysiaca* 3 (London and Cambridge, 1940), p. 210 (41.209–11).

[78] See H. Behlmer, *Schenute von Atripe: De Iudicio* (Turin, 1996), pp. LXXXV–LXXXVIII, 91–3 (fol. XLI rto b 15–XLIII rto a 2) and 247–8. On the possible identity of this man with Shenoute's archfoe Gesios, who will be discussed below, see ibid., pp. LXXXVII–LXXXVIII.

one temple at Atripe, we cannot be absolutely certain which one is involved, but Behlmer suggests quite plausibly that the largest of them, the temple dedicated to the goddess Triphis, is meant.[79] Shenoute claims that he caught this man in the act of 'worshipping Satan' by pouring out libations to him and scattering roses, peach twigs, bunches of vine leaves, and other sweet-scented plants. Neither of them seems to have any knowledge of the goddess to whom the temple was actually dedicated. When the pagan is urged by Shenoute to accept Jesus as his god, he refuses, saying that Jesus displayed no special powers which were not exercised by Apollonios of Tyana and Plato as well. It is noteworthy that he cites these foreigners rather than any native Egyptian wonderworker, or a local figure who combined divinity and humanity within a single person like Harudja of Bompae.[80]

In his sermon on the Last Judgement, Shenoute claims to have burned the temple of Atripe with fire along with everything that was in it at some point prior to his encounter with the pagan there.[81] In one other work Shenoute claims to have burned a pagan temple in Atripe.[82] There he refers to an occasion when he and others 'burned the idol-worshippers' temple which is in Atripe'.[83] The Coptic verb he uses in both cases is ⲣⲱⲕⲉ. In yet another passage of his writings, Shenoute claims to have found and smashed some idols 'in the temple which we burned along with everything that was in it'.[84] It is probable, but not absolutely certain, that the temple in question is the same as the one he mentions in the first two passages.

It is impossible to determine precisely when the burning of the temple of Atripe took place. Emmel suggests that it may have happened soon after the news of the destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria in AD 391 or 392 reached the Akhmim region.[85] The temple of Triphis, constructed of limestone, has suffered considerable damage. This must have been incurred either before or during the time of Shenoute, since some blocks from the temple were incorporated in the fabric of the church of his monastery, which was built *c.* AD 450 near the end of his career.[86] Nevertheless, the surviving

[79] Behlmer, *Schenute von Atripe*, pp. LX–LXI. For the possibility that this temple was actually dedicated jointly to Triphis and Min-Re, see Leitz, *BSFE* 172 (2008), pp. 32–52.

[80] Cf. van Minnen in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, p. 181 note 25.

[81] Behlmer, *Schenute von Atripe*, p. 93 (fol. XLI vso a 14–19).

[82] Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, pp. 162–4; R. El-Sayed, 'Schenute und die Tempel von Atripe: Zur Umnutzung des Triphisbezirks in der Spätantike', in H. Knuf, C. Leitz, and D. von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense: Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2010), p. 526; J. Hahn, 'Schenute von Atripe, die kaiserliche Religionspolitik und der Kampf gegen das Heidentum in Oberägypten', in F. Feder and A. Lohwasser (eds), *Ägypten und sein Umfeld in der Spätantike* (Wiesbaden, 2013), p. 96; J. Dijkstra, '"I Wish to Offer a Sacrifice Today": The Discourse of Idol Destruction in the Coptic *Life of Aaron*', *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 7 (2015), p. 67 (reference courtesy of Edward Love).

[83] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia* 3, p. 91, lines 20–1.

[84] Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, p. 197, line 21.

[85] Ibid., p. 164.

[86] See Klotz, *Ancient Society* 40 (2010), pp. 197–213; D. Klotz, 'Two Studies on the Later Period Temples at Abydos', *BIFAO* 110 (2010), p. 130.

remains of the edifice are still quite extensive.[87] Therefore if Shenoute claims to have destroyed it with fire he is clearly not telling the truth. But perhaps what he means by 'burning' is a sort of ritual cleansing or purification.[88] There are traces of damage due to fire and smoke on some of the surviving wall surfaces of the temple. These could have resulted from Shenoute's activities, but it is equally possible that they are artifacts of the monument's re-use for other purposes in later periods.[89]

What is striking about the accounts cited above is that none of them make any reference to priests or any other sort of personnel attached to the temple of Atripe. They give the definite impression that in Shenoute's lifetime it was no longer active, that the cult of Triphis had ceased to be performed there as it had been earlier in the fourth century. Nevertheless, the edifice remained a conspicuous feature of the landscape and offered itself as a space to be re-imagined and appropriated for other purposes, whether by peach-twig scattering devotees of Greek philosophers who valued it for its solitude, and perhaps for its non-Christian associations as well, or by bands of monks who exploited it as a venue in which to demonstrate their power to do as they pleased. As the recent vandalism of ancient remains at Nineveh, Palmyra, and other sites by supporters of ISIS has shown, religious monuments do not need to be in active use in order to fall victim to the depredations of iconoclasts.[90]

Elsewhere in Shenoute's writings, we find references to the destruction of other temples. He mentions, for example, an occasion when he accompanied some Christians who were taken before a judge when priests lodged a complaint against them because they had destroyed a temple in their village.[91] As Emmel observes, in this case Shenoute does not appear to have been personally involved in the attack on the sanctuary. There were, however, priests attached to it, so evidently it was still functioning. The problem here is that we know nothing about these priests or the type of cult that they served. Was the temple dedicated to a Greek deity or to an Egyptian one? Unfortunately the text does not enlighten us on this point.

[87] See R. El-Sayed and Y. El-Masry, *Athribis* 1 (Cairo, 2012); C. Leitz, D. Mendel, and Y. El-Masri, *Athribis* 2 (Cairo, 2010); El-Sayed in Knuf, Leitz, and von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, pp. 533–6.

[88] Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, p. 164; El-Sayed in Knuf, Leitz, and von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, pp. 527–8.

[89] Ibid., pp. 527 and 534.

[90] Cf. comments of Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, p. 398, who challenges the widespread assumption that only functioning Egyptian temples were targets for this sort of attack.

[91] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia* 3, p. 91, lines 21–4. Cf. Hahn in Feder and Lohwasser (eds), *Ägypten und sein Umfeld in der Spätantike*, p. 96; Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, p. 165; Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, p. 398.

7.1.7. References to pagan worship in private homes in the writings of Shenoute

Temples were not the only places against which Shenoute launched attacks. Private houses belonging to individuals whom he suspected of practising pagan rites were also regarded as legitimate targets by him. In an open letter addressed to the citizens of Akhmim, the archimandrite describes how he and seven monks entered a house there belonging to a man called Gesios, and removed certain incriminating objects from his private chamber. Some identify the man in question with the unnamed pagan whom Shenoute encountered in the temple of Atripe. The date of this break-in is uncertain. Emmel suggests it may have taken place around AD 400.[92] Shenoute gives a detailed description of the items confiscated by him, which included images of Kronos, Hecate, and Zeus, a Nile cubit for measuring the height of the river's inundation, 'images of effeminate men and lewd and licentious women, whose activities are shameful to speak of', and those of priests with shaven heads holding an altar (ϣⲏⲩϵ) in their hands.[93]

If this account is to be believed, Gesios had images of three Greek deities in his house. These would understandably have aroused Shenoute's ire. The Nile cubit, on the other hand, was neutral in religious terms. Both Christians and non-Christians attributed the annual rise of the river's flood to divine agency. However, they differed as to which deity was actually responsible. Nile cubit measures were deposited in churches as well as in temples, as votive offerings expressing gratitude for the blessing of the inundation.[94] Shenoute's objection to the presence of a Nile cubit in the house of Gesios concerns not the object as such but rather the fact that he had laid it at the feet of images of pagan deities. Thus he says 'this thing that we bring in gratitude to the holy church has been brought before the likenesses of demons'.[95]

It is not certain what Shenoute means by 'images of effeminate men and lewd and licentious women, whose activities are shameful to speak of'. Emmel suggests that these may have been nude statues of Greek divinities like Hermes and Aphrodite in classical style, *objets d'art* rather than objects of worship. Another possibility mentioned by him is that the images in question were lewd and grotesque terracotta statuettes of the sort used as decoration in Graeco-Roman houses during late antiquity.[96] However, it is doubtful whether these were still in use by the end of the fourth century.[97]

Also puzzling is Shenoute's reference to 'images of priests with shaven heads holding an altar in their hands'. Some have attempted to identify the figures in question as naophorous statues, effigies of Egyptian priests with shaven heads holding a naos or

[92] Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, p. 181; Emmel in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, pp. 111–12.
[93] Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, pp. 169–70, 190, 192, and 197. Cf. Dijkstra, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 7 (2015), pp. 67–8.
[94] See D. Bonneau, *La crue du Nil* (Paris, 1964), pp. 429–30 and 433–5.
[95] Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, p. 197, lines 6–7.
[96] Ibid., p. 172. [97] See section 7.1.8.

shrine containing the figure of a divinity.[98] There are several problems with this interpretation, however. The most serious one is that an altar and a naos are two very different things. It would be difficult to confuse one with the other, especially for someone who had actually entered a temple and removed the divine images from it as Shenoute claimed to have done. Moreover, naophorous statues were produced from the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic Period, but not thereafter, so by the time that concerns us now they would have been obsolete for more than four centuries. How could Gesios have acquired one and why would he have taken the trouble to install an object in his house which had long ceased to be part of any living religious tradition?

A further difficulty is that naophorous statues were designed specifically to be set up in temples, where they memorialized the devotion of the persons they depicted to the service of the gods in whose presence they stood. A naophorous statue in a private house would have had no point, since it could not have served the purpose for which it was intended in such a setting. Therefore, even if we allow the possibility that Gesios might have had such images in his house, he must have been ignorant of their proper function. He may simply have regarded them as *objets d'art*, a suggestion already made by Emmel.[99] If he was using them for cultic purposes, then this was most likely a cult of his own invention, with no links to any of those that had once been performed in the temples of Akhmim.

One comment that Shenoute makes about the idols he claims to have discovered in the house of Gesios, if truthful, is particularly instructive. He says that he and his followers would not have recognized them for what they were if they had not previously found and destroyed similar effigies in the temple at Atripe that they burned.[100] This tells us three things. The first is that Shenoute's attack on Gesios' house took place after the one launched against the temple. The second is that he had only a vague idea of what pagan idols actually looked like. The third is that, since the idols confiscated from Gesios' house were the same as those found in the temple,[101] that sanctuary must have contained images of Kronos, Hecate, Zeus, and other Greek deities. In other words, its original cult had been discontinued in favour of those of new gods. But it is important to stress the qualifier 'if truthful' here, since we have seen that the writings of Shenoute are not the most reliable or impartial guide to religious life in the Akhmim region at this time. His other statements about the temple at Atripe indicate that it had ceased to function altogether and that no cult of any sort was being performed there when he and his followers raided it.

[98] e.g. Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, p. 170.

[99] Ibid., pp. 171–2; Emmel in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, pp. 99–102. For a similar view, see Medini, *Topoi* 20 (2016), pp. 270–1. Lavan describes them disparagingly, although perhaps not inaccurately, as 'garden ornaments'. See L. Lavan, 'The End of the Temples: Towards a New Narrative?', in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, p. xxix.

[100] Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, p. 197, lines 20–1.

[101] Ibid., p. 197, lines 22–3.

It is widely accepted that Gesios is the same person as Flavius Aelius Gessius, governor of the Thebaid in the closing years of the reign of the Emperor Valens (376–8).[102] There has been much speculation about the nature of this man's religious beliefs.[103] Recent research has cast doubt on the idea that he was a pagan at all. It now seems more likely that he was an Arian Christian.[104] This would account for the fact that his career in public office came to an end with the death of Valens, who subscribed to the doctrine that the nature of the second person of the Trinity was similar rather than identical to that of the first person, and the accession of Theodosius, an ardent supporter of Nicea. It would also explain Shenoute's frequent accusations that Gesios had denied that Jesus was a divine being.[105] From his perspective there would have been little difference, if any, between the adoptionist doctrine advocated by Valens and others, and the outright denial of Christ's divinity expressed by non-Christians. Thus it is easy to see why he might label an opponent like Gesios as a pagan when engaged in polemic against him.

It would appear that Gesios was not the only person whose house was subjected to the sort of invasion described above. In another text, Shenoute describes how he and others entered and removed various objects from houses in an unnamed village, once again against the objections of their owners. These included an image of 'Pan who is Min', a sword used to kill sacrificial animals, and a book filled with magic, as well as other idols, offerings that had been presented to them, and lamps which had been set before them.[106] We have already discussed 'Pan who is Min' in section 7.1.5, concluding that this probably refers to a Greek rather than an Egyptian god. The other items confiscated by Shenoute might have been used in either traditional Egyptian or Greek religious rites, so they tell us nothing about the beliefs to which those who employed them subscribed.

7.1.8. Evidence for domestic cults elsewhere in late antique Egypt

As the examples cited in section 7.1.7 show, we should not underestimate the significance of the private house as a locus of religious activity in late antiquity. At the same time, we should be careful not to overestimate it. In particular, we should not assume that religious practices took place in domestic settings without explicit evidence that they did. Saying that rites of one sort or another might have been carried out in private homes is not the same thing as demonstrating that they actually were. Frankfurter, for example, has claimed that religious practices 'shifted centrifugally from temple cult to village and domestic rites' in Roman Period Egypt.[107] As a result, the house became an

[102] Ibid., p. 166. [103] Ibid., pp. 172–6.
[104] See Bagnall in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, pp. 30–2.
[105] Ibid., p. 31; Emmel in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, p. 173.
[106] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia* 3, p. 89, lines 12–19.
[107] D. Frankfurter, 'Religious Practice and Piety', in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Oxford, 2012), p. 319. For his discussion of domestic rites, see pp. 322–5.

extension, or even a miniature version of the temple.[108] According to Frankfurter, the domestic shrine and family cult were 'the very taproot of religion in Roman Egypt'.[109]

What is the evidence for these assertions? Frankfurter maintains that the domestic cult was focused upon wall niches which contained terracotta figures of local deities.[110] Large numbers of terracotta figures have been recovered from Egyptian sites. However, none has ever been discovered in a wall niche.[111] Moreover, as Kaper has pointed out, no statuettes of local gods have actually been found in a domestic setting.[112] Thus there is no evidence whatsoever to support the view that these were the focus of religious devotion in private households. Nor are there any references to figures of this type in contemporary documents. As Frankfurter himself admits, 'The domestic cult offering seems to escape the papyri.'[113]

Frankfurter attempts to link the terracotta figurines found in Egypt with references to images of deities being venerated in domestic contexts that occur in some Coptic literary works, as if both documented the same phenomenon, one type of evidence corroborating the other.[114] In fact, there is no connection between them. The texts he cites were written in the fifth century or later, by which time the terracotta figurines were no longer in use. Although the dating of the latter is problematic, the generally accepted view is that they began to be mass-produced in the Roman Imperial Period. According to Dunand and others, the peak period for the manufacture of the type of figurines studied by them was the second century and the first half of the third century. In the second half of the third century production began to decline, and gradually ceased altogether in the fourth century.[115] Thus Frankfurter's claim that such figurines were made continuously throughout the fourth century is without foundation, and misrepresents the views of those authorities whom he cites in support of it.[116] In reality, the archaeological evidence for terracotta figurines of divinities runs out well before the literary evidence. The same is true of painted panels depicting deities, some of which

[108] Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, pp. 139–41. [109] Ibid., p. 138.

[110] See e.g. M. Fjeldhagen, *Graeco-Roman Terracottas from Egypt. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek* (Copenhagen, 1995); F. Dunand, *Religion populaire en Égypte romaine: Les terres cuites isiaques du Musée du Caire* (Leiden, 1979); F. Dunand, *Catalogue des terres cuites gréco-romaine d'Égypte* (Paris, 1990).

[111] Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, p. 134.

[112] O. Kaper, Review of D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*, in *BiOr* 58 (2001), p. 130.

[113] Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, p. 136.

[114] See ibid., pp. 132–4; Frankfurter in Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, p. 322; D. Frankfurter, 'Illuminating the Cult of Kothos: The Panegyric on Macarius and Local Religion in Fifth-Century Egypt', in J. Goehring and J. Timbie (eds), *The World of Early Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social Context. Essays in Honor of David W. Johnson* (Washington, 2007), pp. 180–2.

[115] See Dunand, *Religion populaire en Égypte romaine*, pp. 29–31; Dunand, *Catalogue des terres cuites gréco-romaine d'Égypte*, pp. 9–13; Fjeldhagen, *Graeco-Roman Terracottas from Egypt*, pp. 13–14.

[116] Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, p. 132, basing his claim upon the two works of Dunand cited in the previous note; D. Frankfurter, 'Terracotta Figurines and Popular Religion in Late Antique Egypt: Issues of Continuity and "Survival"', in G. Tallet and C. Zivie-Coche (eds), *Le myrte & la rose: Mélanges offerts à Françoise Dunand par ses élèves, collègues et amis* 1 (Montpellier, 2014), p. 131.

have actually been found in niches. Most of these date to the second century. Some may be assignable to the first century, and a few to the first half of the third century.[117]

The chief Coptic literary work cited by Frankfurter as evidence that figures of deities were still used for devotional purposes in private homes as late as the period that concerns us now is a panegyric on Macarius, bishop of Tkow, falsely attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria.[118] The subject of this work is said to have died *c.* AD 451. The alleged author was Patriarch of Alexandria from 444 until 451, when he was exiled to Gangra on the Black Sea, where he is supposed to have delivered the panegyric to an audience of visiting monks. The work is extant in Coptic and Arabic versions and was probably not composed before the second quarter of the sixth century.[119]

The narrator of the text relates how he prevailed upon Pinoution, the deacon of Macarius, to describe some of the wondrous deeds that the bishop performed during his career. One of these involves a village on the west side of the river where a god called Kothos (or Gothos) was worshipped, images of whom were set up in niches in houses. When the residents entered their homes they would bow their heads and pay homage to the deity.[120] A priest who lived in the village came to complain about the behaviour of these pagans to Macarius. He accused them of murdering Christian children and pouring their blood out at the altar of Kothos. Afterwards, they would remove the intestines of the slaughtered children and use them to string the lyres which they played when singing hymns to the god, and also, apparently, when looking for buried treasure.

In response, Macarius and three others, including Pinoution, went to the village, where they were captured by the pagans. Just as they were about to be sacrificed to Kothos, a band of fourteen monks led by Besa, the disciple and successor of Shenoute, arrived on the scene and demanded entry to the temple where they were being held. On being refused, Besa prayed and the door of the temple opened of its own accord. When the pagans saw them enter they were paralysed with fear and became like stones. The bonds restraining Macarius and his companions fell away miraculously. They prayed that fire might descend from heaven and destroy the temple. In response, a heavenly voice warned them to evacuate the building. No sooner had they done so than a fire broke out which reduced the entire temple to its foundations in less than an hour.

After cursing the ground where the temple had stood so that it could never be fruitful again, Macarius and Besa went into the village. Its Christian residents, now freed from oppression, arose in a body and threw the high priest of Kothos and the idols they found in his house into a fire, singing psalms as they did so. Some of the

[117] See V. Rondot, *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte* (Paris, 2013), pp. 27–36, especially pp. 35–6.

[118] For the text, see D. Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius Bishop of Tkôw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria* (Leuven, 1980). Additional bibliography on it is cited in Dijkstra, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 7 (2015), pp. 68–9.

[119] See Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius Bishop of Tkôw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, text volume, pp. 7*–13*, translation volume, pp. 8*–11*; D. Johnson, 'Macarius of Tkow, Saint', in A. Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 5 (New York and Toronto, 1991), pp. 1492–4.

[120] Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius Bishop of Tkôw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, text volume, p. 29, lines 1–11. One version adds 'and offer up a sacrifice to him'.

pagans in the village converted to Christianity on the spot. Others threw their movable property into wells and cisterns and fled into the desert, taking only their own personal idols along with them. The total number of idols destroyed in the village that day was 306. Christians moved into the houses that had been abandoned by the fleeing pagans, presumably taking care to clear their niches of any images of Kothos that the previous occupants had inadvertently left behind them before settling in.[121]

Various terms have been used to characterize the panegyric on Macarius of Tkow. It has been called a 'fabrication',[122] a 'hagiographical romance',[123] an 'artless collection of stories',[124] and 'a fantasy of the author'.[125] The village where the episode summarized above is set has no name, just like those in fairy tales. Although the place is clearly meant to be somewhere in Egypt, its god Kothos is not an Egyptian god and is unknown elsewhere.[126] His high priest addresses him as 'the brother of Apollo' and 'commander of the air', which is how St Paul refers to Satan in Ephesians 2:2.[127] The priest in question, whom one might have expected to bear a traditional Egyptian name, is called Homer. The events recounted in other sections of the panegyric are equally fantastic and at variance with historical fact. The author to whom it is attributed died well before the earliest possible date when it could have been written. It is not even certain whether its protagonist, Macarius of Tkow, actually existed.

Despite all this, Frankfurter accepts the work as a reliable source of information about the persistence of traditional Egyptian cults during the period in which it is set.[128] Given that one scholar has identified perversion of historical probability as a characteristic

[121] Ibid., pp. 29–40.

[122] Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius Bishop of Tkôw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, translation volume, p. 11*.

[123] Johnson in Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 5, p. 1493.

[124] Johnson, *A Panegyric on Macarius Bishop of Tkôw Attributed to Dioscorus of Alexandria*, translation volume, p. 11*.

[125] Ibid., p. 9*.

[126] He is unlikely to be connected with *Geth*ⲥ, a being invoked in the demotic London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, since this is glossed ⲕⲉⲑⲟⲥ in that text. In any event the latter's name is simply one of a long string of *voces magicae*. See J. Quack, 'Griechische und andere Dämonen in den spätdemotischen magischen Texten', in T. Schneider (ed.), *Das Ägyptische und die Sprachen Vorderasiens, Nordafrikas und der Ägäis* (Münster, 2004), p. 486. Frankfurter's proposal to derive Kothos/Gothos from Greek *ἀγαθὸς δαίμων*, for which, see Goehring and Timbie (eds), *The World of Early Christianity*, p. 178, is also implausible. It requires one to delete seven of the latter's constituent letters altogether, change an eighth letter to something completely different, and remove the accent from a ninth, leaving only three out of a total of twelve letters unaltered. It is this false etymology which underlies his claim that 'a Christian saint's life recalls that traditional devotees to Shai maintained niches for an image of the god in their homes' in Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, p. 322. As we will see in section 7.1.10, this claim is totally spurious.

[127] See P. van Minnen, 'Saving History? Egyptian Hagiography in its Space and Time', in J. Dijkstra and M. van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert: Egyptian Hagiography and the Medieval West* (Leiden, 2006), p. 75. For other obvious biblical borrowings in this narrative, see Dijkstra, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 7 (2015), pp. 68–9.

[128] See Frankfurter in Goehring and Timbie (eds), *The World of Early Christianity*, pp. 176–88, especially p. 188, where he says that it 'provides a priceless picture, authentic in many details, of persisting Egyptian religion'.

feature of Frankfurter's own publications,[129] perhaps his affinity for a text like this one is not surprising. Others, however, have not been so credulous, as the descriptions of the panegyric cited in the preceding paragraph make clear. The view taken here is that its value as a historical source is nil. Accordingly, its descriptions of religious observances in the village of Kothos cannot be taken seriously.

7.1.9. Shenoute's credibility as a source of evidence for domestic cults in the Akhmim region

Contemporary evidence for the veneration of polytheistic deities in domestic contexts in Akhmim and its environs during the period that concerns us now comes almost exclusively from the corpus of writings left by Shenoute. Stadler believes that his works provide more trustworthy information on this subject than later hagiographies do because Shenoute was writing about what he actually saw around him and not something that had happened in the past. Thus he accepts them as valid historical sources.[130] In my opinion, this view is too simplistic. The fact that an author is writing about contemporary events provides no guarantee that his account is unbiased or free from distortion. By Stadler's logic we would have to accept the various official accounts of the battle of Kadesh promulgated by Ramesses II as true reports of that king's heroic deeds on the field of combat, since they reflect the perspective of an eyewitness and participant. Any account, whether contemporary or not, has to be evaluated critically before it can be accepted as evidence.

As we have seen, Shenoute's treatment of Gesios in his writings is far from unbiased. He sets out deliberately to blacken his opponent's name. In early Christian polemic, the surest way of doing this was to denounce an enemy as a heretic or pagan. Whether or not the charge was true was of little importance. The same tactic could be employed against the accused parties in contemporary legal complaints.[131] Here too, the veracity of the charge was irrelevant. Shenoute's descriptions of what he found in the house of Gesios or of the various blasphemies uttered by his opponent during their conversations together need to be read in this light. They should also be viewed as part of a wider debate within Christianity about the potential threat that private, as opposed to public, ritual activity posed to orthodoxy, which intensified during the fourth and early fifth centuries. According to one view prevalent at this time, any rite performed in the secrecy of the home, however innocuous, was suspect and therefore liable to condemnation as heresy or even sorcery.[132]

[129] See van Minnen in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, p. 181 note 25.

[130] Stadler, *Einführung in die ägyptische Religion ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit nach den demotischen religiösen Texten*, pp. 194–5.

[131] See Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 4–11.

[132] See K. Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 44–60, 189–202, and 221–2.

7.1.10. References to tutelary spirits in the writings of Shenoute

To be sure, Gesios is not the only individual whom Shenoute accuses of observing pagan practices in the home. In one of his works he fulminates against 'men and women who give thanks to demons, saying "It is (the time for) worshipping the tutelary spirit (ⲡϣⲁⲓ) today", whether the tutelary spirit of the village or the tutelary spirit of the house, lighting lamps for what is vain and offering incense to the name of phantasms'.[133] Frankfurter totally misunderstands what Shenoute is saying here. He thinks that ⲡϣⲁⲓ is the name of a specific regional god.[134] According to him, this passage provides 'testimony to the continuity of traditional domestic piety through the fifth century'.[135] But ⲡϣⲁⲓ is not the name of a god, regional or otherwise. In Egyptian texts of earlier periods, its ancestor *pꜣ šy* was sometimes used as an appellation for the primordial creator deity.[136] But it was also used in a more generic sense to denote any supernatural being associated with a particular place as its protector. This could be a large city like Alexandria. But a stone quarry, or even a particular gallery within such a quarry, might have its own individual tutelary or guardian spirit as well.[137] It is this more generic sense of the word that has survived into Coptic. Thus Shenoute is accurate in describing such beings as 'demons' (ⲇⲁⲓⲙⲟⲛⲓⲟⲛ), since the basic meaning of the Egyptian term used to designate them is not unlike that of Greek δαίμων.

Unfortunately, Frankfurter has muddled the two usages of *pꜣ šy*, confusing its employment as the appellation of a specific deity, the creator god, with its use as a generic term for tutelary spirit. This leads him to the erroneous conclusion that what Shenoute is castigating in his sermon is actually a cult of the former.[138] As proof of the alleged popularity of this deity in the Akhmim region, Frankfurter cites personal names in texts emanating from that area which incorporate the element ⲡϣⲁⲓ.[139] But these tell us nothing, since by Shenoute's time, and even before, personal names were no longer a reliable indicator of the bearer's religious affiliation.[140] Witness those of such prominent monastic figures as Pakhom and Horsiese, which refer to traditional Egyptian deities or sacred concepts, or even the name of Shenoute's friend and colleague Pshoi of Psooun, which is a dialectical variant of ⲡϣⲁⲓ.

[133] Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 1, p. 379.
[134] Frankfurter in Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, p. 322.
[135] Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, p. 137.
[136] See M. Smith, *On the Primaeval Ocean* (Copenhagen, 2002), pp. 22–3, 61–4, and 210–11.
[137] See, for example, W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar* (Copenhagen, 1954), pp. 485–6; F. Preisigke and W. Spiegelberg, *Ägyptische und griechische Inschriften und Graffiti aus den Steinbrüchen des Gebel Silsile (Oberägypten)* (Strasbourg, 1915), p. 23.
[138] See Frankfurter in Goehring and Timbie (eds), *The World of Early Christianity*, pp. 178–80. Note especially his citation of an invocation to the primordial creator from a Greek magical papyrus on p. 179. For the identity of the god invoked there, see Smith, *On the Primaeval Ocean*, pp. 210–11.
[139] Frankfurter in Goehring and Timbie (eds), *The World of Early Christianity*, p. 179.
[140] See Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri*, pp. 51–6; Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 263.

The concept of a tutelary spirit is not unique to Egyptian religion, of course. Since Coptic ⲡⲫⲁⲓ does not denote a traditional Egyptian deity in the passage cited above, there is no justification for assuming that the sort of domestic cult condemned by Shenoute is a specifically Egyptian one. The fact that he uses an Egyptian term to denote the tutelary spirits whose worship he castigates tells us nothing about their nature or that of the belief system to which they belong. It is analogous to his employment of Egyptian words like ⲁⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ and ⲛⲟⲩⲛ to denote the Christian Hell a few lines further on in the same passage. The words in question, like the personal names cited in the preceding paragraph, originally referred to specifically Egyptian religious conceptions but had long since lost their earlier associations and were now neutral in religious terms.

7.1.11. The private house as a temple in microcosm?

One particularly problematic aspect of Frankfurter's thesis about domestic religion in the time of Shenoute is the idea that private houses became microcosms of temples, in which the temple cults continued with full vigour only in miniaturized form. This reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the Egyptian concept of sacred space. In the Egyptian view, a site was not sacred because a temple had been built there. Rather, a temple was built at a particular site because it was sacred, this property having been conferred on it by some event or occurrence that had taken place there in the past.[141] Sanctity was inherent to sites, not the shrines or sanctuaries erected on them. Accordingly, it was not a movable or transferable property.

Furthermore, Quack has demonstrated conclusively that no such process of miniaturization occurred in Roman Egypt.[142] Domestic cults were already a feature of religious life in Pharaonic times. Thus they are not specific to the Roman Period and cannot be explained as a change that occurred in response to social and religious pressures. Domestic cults existed alongside temple cults, and were not a substitute or replacement for them. Consequently, there are no grounds for assuming, as Frankfurter does, that the images Shenoute claims to have found in the house of Gesios had been 'rescued' from a temple,[143] or that 'the book filled with all magic' that he confiscated from another house was a temple ritual, as Stadler maintains.[144]

[141] The temple of Horus at Edfu, for example, was erected in its present location because this was thought to be where a thicket of reeds drifting in the waters of the primordial ocean came to a stop and the creator god in the form of a falcon alighted upon it and summoned the rest of creation into existence. See Smith, *On the Primaeval Ocean*, pp. 27–30.

[142] J. Quack, 'Miniaturisierung als Schlüssel zum Verständnis römerzeitlicher ägyptischer Rituale?', in O. Hekster, S. Schmidt-Hofner, and C. Witschel (eds), *Ritual Dynamics and Religious Change in the Roman Empire* (Leiden and Boston, 2009), pp. 349–66.

[143] D. Frankfurter, 'Iconoclasm and Christianization in Late Antique Egypt: Christian Treatments of Space and Image', in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, pp. 142–3.

[144] See M. Stadler, 'Egyptian Cult: Evidence from Temple Scriptoria and Christian Hagiographies', in Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, pp. 461 and 467, and Stadler, *Einführung in die*

7.1.12. A quarrel over a piece of wood

Originally, Frankfurter's argument that traditional Egyptian domestic cults persisted into the fifth century formed part of a much more sweeping claim that the older indigenous religion not only survived but flourished at Akhmim during Shenoute's lifetime. This was published in 1998.[145] Four years later, in 2002, I presented a critique of Frankfurter's thesis, pointing out the methodological and other flaws that undermined it and rendered its conclusions unacceptable.[146] These included: 'naïve and uncritical use of literary, often highly rhetorical, sources as historical evidence; ignorance of traditional Egyptian religion and the forms which it took in and around Akhmim during the Graeco-Roman Period, resulting in an inability to distinguish it from the Greek religion which co-existed alongside it there; disregard for the spatial and temporal distribution of the evidence for particular Egyptian religious phenomena; and insensitivity to the need of analysing Egyptian religious beliefs and practices within the context of a specific regional and chronological setting.'[147] After citing and discussing several examples in which Frankfurter had claimed a text said one thing when in fact it said something quite different, I concluded that 'such egregious distortion and misrepresentation of evidence disqualifies Frankfurter's book from consideration as a work of serious scholarship'.[148]

There is no need to go over this ground again. For one thing, others besides myself have drawn attention to Frankfurter's propensity for distorting evidence. Thus Bagnall says of his 1998 publication, 'Misuse of evidence is, regrettably, a pervasive feature of Frankfurter's book.'[149] We have already noted van Minnen's reference to Frankfurter's 'typical perversion of historical probability' in section 7.1.8. For another thing, Frankfurter himself, in an article published in 2006, has retracted nearly all of his earlier claims about religion at Akhmim in response to my critique.[150] Although at no point does he acknowledge my corrections of his errors as the reason for his retraction, it will be immediately apparent to anyone who reads his original treatment of the evidence, my critique of it, and the changes adopted in his subsequent treatment, what the impetus for these was.[151]

ägyptische Religion ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit nach den demotischen religiösen Texten, pp. 9 and 194, where he identifies the place from which the book was removed as a pagan sanctuary, specifically a temple of Min. In Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia* 3, p. 87, lines 25 and 27, it is clearly said to be a house (ⲏⲓ).

[145] See Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, pp. 77–82 and *passim*.

[146] Smith in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, pp. 245–7.

[147] Ibid., p. 245. [148] Ibid., p. 247.

[149] Bagnall in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, p. 24 note 6, giving additional examples of this tendency.

[150] D. Frankfurter, 'Hagiography and the Reconstruction of Local Religion in Late Antique Egypt: Memories, Inventions, and Landscapes', in Dijkstra and van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert*, pp. 13–37.

[151] See, for example, ibid., pp. 16 (admitting that the village of Pleuit mentioned in Shenoute's biography is not the same as the village he mentions in his sermon, contrary to what was claimed in *Religion in Roman Egypt*), 20 (acknowledging the importance of recognizing biblical typology where it occurs in works by and

Only in one instance does Frankfurter still cling to his earlier interpretation. This concerns a letter from the fifth century written by Besa, Shenoute's disciple and successor, in which that monk addresses a group of local people who are quarrelling over what he calls 'a piece of wood' (ⲟⲩⲗⲁⲕⲙⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲉ).[152] He enjoins them not to fight, since such behaviour is displeasing to both God and men. No further details are provided about the piece of wood which is the object of the quarrel. It could be a fragment of that material or, if Besa uses the term in a disparaging way, some object made of wood which he means to imply is not sufficiently important to allow a disruption in community relations to occur because of it, for example, a boat, an agricultural implement, or a piece of irrigation equipment. Nevertheless, in his original publication, Frankfurter claimed that it was an image of an Egyptian deity which was the subject of a dispute between Christians and pagans.[153] In my critique I pointed out that there were no grounds for this interpretation, and that in fact it was clear from what Besa says in his letter that all the parties involved in the dispute are Christians. Therefore, to see a reference to an idol in his remarks, and to a specifically Egyptian idol at that, was entirely unwarranted.[154]

In his 2006 article, Frankfurter returns to this letter. Still ignoring the fact that all those to whom Besa writes are clearly Christians, he maintains that the monk is admonishing the recipients of his letter for quarrelling over an Egyptian divine image which one group of them still worships. His justification for this view is that in some of his writings Shenoute uses terms like wood and stone in a derogatory way to refer to images of polytheistic deities. Therefore, Besa must be doing the same in his letter.[155] But this reflects a lack of familiarity with Shenoutian style on Frankfurter's part, and a consequent misunderstanding of how Shenoute actually employs words like wood and stone as terms of disparagement. In fact, he only does so in contexts where it is absolutely clear from other information supplied that he is referring to idols.

about Shenoute, failure to do which was a marked failing of that earlier book), 30 (acknowledging that the story of Shenoute's raid on Pleuit in his biography is modelled on the biblical story of Balaam and his ass, overlooked in *Religion in Roman Egypt*), and 31 (accepting that historians must treat hagiographical descriptions of temple ritual with utmost scepticism, which was not the practice in Frankfurter's earlier book). The fact that the biblical story of Balaam underlies the account of Shenoute's raid on Pleuit has since been acknowledged by others, for example, Dijkstra, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 7 (2015), pp. 66 and 70, although without noting that this was first pointed out by me.

[152] See K.H. Kuhn, *Letters and Sermons of Besa* (Leuven, 1956), pp. 129–30, Fragment 41. Frankfurter in Dijkstra and van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert*, p. 35, mistakenly calls the text in question a sermon, but it is labelled unambiguously as an ⲉⲡⲓⲥⲧⲟⲗⲏ. He also gives the Coptic words cited here incorrectly as ⲟⲩⲗⲁⲕⲙⲉ ⲛⲥⲏⲉ, which is nonsense.

[153] See Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, pp. 79 and 281–2, also the same author's 'Things Unbefitting Christians: Violence and Christianization in Fifth-Century Panopolis', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), pp. 273–95, where this claim is repeated.

[154] Smith in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, p. 247. The same applies to the idea that the conflict was an intergenerational one, proposed in Frankfurter, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), pp. 289–94. There is nothing in the text to support such an interpretation.

[155] Frankfurter in Dijkstra and van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert*, p. 36; Frankfurter in Goehring and Timbie (eds), *The World of Early Christianity*, p. 187.

Thus, in one work, Shenoute fulminates 'Woe to the one who will adore wood and stone or any other work of the hands of men.'[156] Elsewhere, he asks rhetorically 'Is it not a man, or are they not men, who have worked on every form of wood and stone that they might fashion them into idols and shrines?'[157] A few lines further on, he dismisses the goddess Isis as a lump of stone quarried from a mountain.[158] In other texts, Shenoute refers to 'those who worship other gods, these who are not gods but wood and stone',[159] those who 'worship wood and stone and all the other vain things',[160] and 'those (gods) whom the pagans worship, of wood and stone'.[161] Even in the specific passage that Frankfurter cites in support of his argument, the fact that Shenoute is referring to idols of wood and stone is made explicit, for he says 'Who is more objectionable or who is more vile, and their tongues as well, than those who pay honour to pieces of wood and pieces of stone and bits of silver and gold and the rest of the false gods?'[162] Thus the passage in question actually refutes Frankfurter's view rather than supporting it. By only quoting selectively from Shenoute's words, he gives a misleading impression of what the passage really says, so this is yet a further instance in which he misrepresents evidence.

Frankfurter's interpretation of Besa's letter begs the question of why that monk would admonish Christians for objecting to the presence of a pagan image and cult in their midst. This seems perverse. Since he was a disciple of Shenoute, surely their toleration of such an image and cult would have been much more abhorrent to him than any attempt on their part to suppress them. Frankfurter also questions why a Christian leader would object to a dispute over a tool or piece of equipment made of wood.[163] Besa himself provides the answer to this question in his letter, if one only takes the trouble to read it: quarrelling of any sort is prohibited in the Bible.[164] Thus he says: 'For so also is it written: It is not fitting for a servant of the lord to fight.'[165] A few lines later, he adds 'And again the holy apostle says: Neither those who fight nor those who curse will inherit the kingdom of God.'[166] The first of these admonitions quotes St Paul's second letter to Timothy (2:24). The second alludes to his first letter to the Corinthians (6:10). In my original critique of Frankfurter's work I noted that a writer like Besa did not need to label every biblical quotation or allusion that he used in an explicit fashion, since he knew that his audience would be able to recognize them with ease.[167] It is obvious that not all modern commentators on Besa's work possess the same facility.

[156] Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 1, p. 381.
[157] Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 2, p. 407. On this passage, see Dijkstra, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 7 (2015), pp. 61–3.
[158] Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 2, p. 408.
[159] Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 1, pp. 230–1.
[160] É. Chassinat, *Le quatrième livre des entretiens et epîtres de Shenouti* (Cairo, 1911), p. 137.
[161] Ibid., p. 109.
[162] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia* 3, pp. 113–14.
[163] Frankfurter in Dijkstra and van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert*, p. 35.
[164] Had any pagans still been around at this time, Besa no doubt would have exempted quarrelling with them from this stricture, but since there were none he did not need to make this distinction.
[165] Kuhn, *Letters and Sermons of Besa*, p. 130, lines 7–8. [166] Ibid., lines 10–12.
[167] Smith in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, p. 246.

7.1.13. Summary of evidence relating to Shenoute and the end of paganism in the Akhmim region

To return to Shenoute himself, how should we characterize the religious beliefs and practices that he opposes in his writings? What he inveighs against is clearly not the traditional Egyptian religion of the Akhmim region, despite Frankfurter's claims to the contrary. As demonstrated in the preceding sections of this chapter, the latter's claims are based on a misunderstanding of what traditional Egyptian religion was actually like in this region and what forms it took. Therefore, they can be discounted. In fact, when not specifically Greek, the paganism that Shenoute opposes in his writings is of a bland generic variety that might have been encountered almost anywhere. Does this mean that, despite his pose of having intimate knowledge of the beliefs and practices of his religious opponents he was actually very ignorant of what went on around him?[168] Or did he deliberately distort or misrepresent the beliefs of his foes, as we know other Christian polemicists did?[169] Or, by Shenoute's time, was all that survived of the old religion for him to oppose simply a few ideas lingering on in the debased form of popular superstition and more or less subsumed within the broader framework of the dominant Hellenism?[170] As an example one might point to the colloquial saying 'Be strong, O moon' condemned in one of his works, which actually survives in modified form in Egypt to this day.[171] Whatever the case, there is no evidence that Shenoute had ever heard of the god Osiris or his cult, which supports the idea that belief in that deity had already ceased in the Akhmim region before his career began.

7.2. PHILAE

The island of Philae was situated to the south of the first cataract. Its name may derive from Egyptian *pꜣ ỉw rk*, 'the island of time', although this etymology has been disputed.[172] The nearest important settlements were to the north of the cataract: the town

[168] Cf. his admission, in one work discussed in section 7.1.7, that he would not have recognized the images he found in the house of Gesios as pagan idols if he had not seen similar ones in the temple of Atripe previously.

[169] Cf. his treatment of the 'pagan' Gesios described in section 7.1.7.

[170] See van der Vliet in *Begegnung von Heidentum und Christentum im spätantiken Ägypten*, p. 128; Medini, *Topoi* 20 (2016), pp. 265–6. Similarly Stadler, *Einführung in die ägyptische Religion ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit nach den demotischen religiösen Texten*, p. 191, suggests that it is no longer meaningful to speak of a distinction between Greek and Egyptian religion by this date.

[171] See A. Saleh, 'Notes on the Phonetic Value of Some Egyptian Letters', in W. Reineke (ed.), *Acts of the First International Congress of Egyptology, Cairo, October 2–10, 1976* (Berlin, 1979), p. 559. For Shenoute's condemnation of those who recite these words, see Amélineau, *Oeuvres de Schenoudi* 1, p. 379.

[172] See Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 25 note 114; I. Rutherford, 'Island of the Extremity: Space, Language, and Power in the Pilgrimage Traditions of Philae', in D. Frankfurter (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 1998), p. 233.

of Syene on the east bank of the Nile and the island of Elephantine which lay opposite it.[173] Between 1974 and 1980 the ancient monuments of Philae were dismantled and moved to the adjacent island of Agilkyia to prevent them from being permanently submerged by the waters of the new Aswan High Dam. They were re-erected there at a higher level, maintaining the orientation and relative positions of the structures in their original location.[174]

7.2.1. The temples and sanctuaries of Philae

Pottery sherds of Middle Kingdom date were discovered on the island of Philae, providing evidence that it was visited at that time. A few inscribed blocks dating to the New Kingdom were found there as well. However, these may have been brought from elsewhere for re-use as building material. Remains from the twenty-fifth dynasty found on Philae include eighteen blocks from a monument erected by Taharqa (690–664 BC) and the base of a granite altar that he dedicated to the god Amun.[175] The earliest surviving structure on the island is a kiosk erected in the reign of the twenty-sixth dynasty king Psammetichus II (595–589). Another king of the same dynasty, Amasis (570–526), built a small temple on the west side of the island, which is now known only from re-used blocks.[176] Under Nectanebo I, the first ruler of the thirtieth dynasty (380–362), a gateway and a large kiosk near the water's edge were erected.[177] But it was not until the Ptolemaic Period that any large-scale construction was initiated on the island of Philae.

The most imposing structure on the island was the temple dedicated to the goddess Isis. The main part of this was built and decorated in the reign of Ptolemy II (285–246 BC). Its exterior walls were decorated under Augustus.[178] To the southwest of this, a birth house was added. The oldest parts of this date to the reign of Ptolemy III. It was subsequently extended by later rulers, Ptolemaic and Roman.[179] The pronaos and the two pylons of the temple of Isis were begun in the reign of Ptolemy VI. The interior of the pronaos was decorated under Ptolemy VIII and the exterior under Augustus and Tiberius. The pylons received their decoration in the reign of Ptolemy XII.[180] Other notable structures on the island include a small temple dedicated to Imhotep (Ptolemy V),[181] a temple of Arensnuphis and Osiris (Ptolemies III–VI and Tiberius),[182] the colonnades

[173] See Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 24–5 and maps on pp. 451–2.

[174] G. Haeny, 'Philae', in K. Bard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt* (London and New York, 1999), p. 617.

[175] See reference cited in the preceding note.

[176] For a good guide to the surviving monuments of Philae, see S. Cauville and M. Ali, *Philae: Itinéraire du visiteur* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2013). The kiosk of Psammetichus II and the blocks of Amasis are described ibid., pp. 8 and 197.

[177] Ibid., pp. 19–30 and 98–104.

[178] Ibid., pp. 227–54 and 286–94.

[179] Ibid., pp. 125–53.

[180] Ibid., pp. 93–124, 178–225, and 294–6.

[181] Ibid., pp. 79–86.

[182] Ibid., pp. 31–49.

built by Augustus and Tiberius,[183] the remains of a chapel dedicated to Mandulis,[184] the gateway of Hadrian leading to the island of Bigga,[185] the temple of Horus the protector of his father,[186] the northern temple dedicated to Augustus,[187] the quay and gateway of Diocletian,[188] the temple of Hathor (Ptolemies VI and VIII and Augustus),[189] and the kiosk of Trajan.[190] There were also various smaller sanctuaries. It is significant to note that no new religious structures were erected on Philae after the second century AD.

7.2.2. The cult of Osiris at Philae

The chief deity worshipped at Philae was the goddess Isis, and thanks to her growing international fame in the Graeco-Roman Period, pilgrims came from around the world to visit the island.[191] Since the god Osiris was the husband of Isis, it is not surprising to find that he played an important role in the religious life of Philae as well. As noted in section 7.2.1, one temple there was dedicated jointly to Osiris and Arensnuphis. But Osiris appears in offering and ritual scenes in other monuments as well, and is addressed in a number of hymns and other texts inscribed on their walls.[192] The *soubassement* of the outer wall of the main temple at Philae is decorated with scenes in which the king conducts the nomes of Egypt and their products to Osiris.[193] Evidence of popular devotion to that god is provided by the columns of the west portico leading to the first pylon of the main temple, on which scenes depicting him and Isis are lined with grooves (*cupules*) where material has been scraped away by devotees, to the extent that in some instances the texts identifying the two deities have disappeared.[194]

The focal point of cultic activity for Osiris at Philae was a chamber in the southwest corner of the upper level in the rear part of the main temple.[195] It was there that the mysteries of the god were performed during the month of Khoiak each year. As we saw in section 4.12.4, the central feature of these mysteries was the fabrication of a pair of small figures, one of Osiris and one of Sokar, with whom Osiris was identified.[196] The

[183] Ibid., pp. 51–62. [184] Ibid., pp. 58–9. [185] Ibid., pp. 255–78.
[186] Ibid., p. 281. [187] Ibid., pp. 283–4. [188] Ibid., pp. 281–3.
[189] Ibid., pp. 297–312. [190] Ibid., pp. 313–20.
[191] For an overview of pilgrimage to Philae, see Rutherford in Frankfurter (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, pp. 229–56.
[192] See, for example, Cauville and Ali, *Philae*, pp. 70–6, 210–15, 237–9, and 257–78.
[193] See C. Leitz, *Geographisch-osirianische Prozessionen aus Philae, Dendara und Athribis* (Wiesbaden, 2012).
[194] Cauville and Ali, *Philae*, p. 54. For this practice, cf. C. Traunecker, 'Une pratique de magie populaire dans les temples de Karnak', in A. Roccati and A. Siliotti (eds), *La magia in Egitto ai tempi dei faraoni* (Milan, 1987), pp. 221–42; J. Dijkstra, *The Figural and Textual Graffiti from the Temple of Isis at Aswan* (Mainz am Rhein, 2012), pp. 27–8.
[195] Cauville and Ali, *Philae*, pp. 245–54.
[196] See L. Coulon, 'Le culte osirien au Ier millénaire av. J.-C.: Une mise en perspective(s)', in L. Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents* (Cairo, 2010), pp. 9–12, and references cited there; A. von Lieven, 'Das Verhältnis zwischen Tempel und Grab im griechisch-römischen Ägypten', *RdE* 61 (2010), p. 97 note 35.

figure of Osiris was formed from a mixture of earth, sand, and grain, and watered from 12 Khoiak to 21 Khoiak until the grain germinated, prefiguring the god's resurrection. Afterwards it was buried for a period of one year, at the end of which time it would be replaced with a new figure and moved to a more permanent resting place. The process was repeated annually, thereby ensuring the god's perpetual renewal.

Osiris was associated with the annual Nile inundation, which was identified as the efflux from his body. The rise of the river was first discernible at Egypt's southern border in June, and reached its peak in this region in September. The fields in southern Egypt were drained by mid-October. By November, drainage was nearly complete throughout the entire country and planting could begin. In the period that concerns us, the Khoiak mysteries were always celebrated in the second half of December, after the inundation had taken place and the country had been fertilized. They coincided with the completion of the task of sowing the new crops.[197] There was a link between the germination of the Osiris figure and the fertilization of the fields, since both occurred annually through the renewing agency of Nile water.[198] The land of Egypt itself could be identified as the body of the god.[199] Since the source of the Upper Egyptian inundation was thought to be located in the first cataract region,[200] the connection between the flood and Osiris was particularly salient there.

One important ceremony performed during the Khoiak mysteries was the *Stundenwachen*, a vigil kept over the figure of Osiris during the hours of the night and day, during which the god was mourned, protected, revivified, and justified. This both commemorated and perpetuated the vigil held over his body by Isis and Nephthys, assisted by other deities like Horus, Thoth, and Anubis, immediately prior to his resurrection.[201] At Philae, the scenes and texts pertaining to this hourly vigil were inscribed, not in the Osiris chamber itself, but on the architraves of the pronaos.[202]

It was believed that Osiris was buried on the island of Bigga, immediately to the west of Philae.[203] His tomb lay within a grove of trees, surrounded by 365 offering tables. The place where he was interred was called *i.t wꜥb.t*, 'pure mound', in Egyptian, and Abaton, a name which means 'inaccessible, not to be trodden', in Greek.[204] The island could be viewed from Philae through windows set in the colonnade that bordered the

[197] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 202–4; R. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 20–3.

[198] F. Colin, 'Le parfeumer (*pr ḥnṯ*)', *BIFAO* 103 (2003), pp. 78–9.

[199] G. Zaki, *Le Premier Nome de Haut-Égypte du IIIe siècle avant J.-C. au VIIe siècle après J.-C. d'après les sources hiéroglyphiques des temples ptolémaïques et romaines* (Turnhout, 2009), p. 224–7.

[200] Lower Egypt was thought to have its own separate inundation, the source of which was located at Kheraha near present-day Old Cairo. See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 149 note 30.

[201] See A. Pries, *Die Stundenwachen im Osiriskult: Eine Studie zur Tradition und späten Rezeption von Ritualen im Alten Ägypten* (Wiesbaden, 2011); A. Kucharek, *Die Klagelieder von Isis und Nephthys in Texten der Griechisch-Römischen Zeit* (Heidelberg, 2010), pp. 49–51 and 424–96.

[202] Pries, *Die Stundenwachen im Osiriskult*, pp. 34–5; Kucharek, *Die Klagelieder von Isis und Nephthys in Texten der Griechisch-Römischen Zeit*, pp. 51 and 503–6; Cauville and Ali, *Philae*, pp. 214–15.

[203] See map in Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 452, figure 2.

[204] Griffiths, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride*, pp. 367–8.

western shore. Two hieroglyphic inscriptions on the gateway of Hadrian, which originally led down to the river at a point opposite Bigga, preserve decrees that regulate what was supposed to happen there. They are inscribed on the north and south inner walls of the gateway.[205]

The first decree, inscribed on the north wall, begins with a hymn to the *ba* of Osiris. It stresses that he is ruler over everything, calling him the twice unique one who created what exists, noble primordial one, and *ba* who is over the gods and the goddesses. It says that he has come in peace to his holy mound and relates what services various divinities are to perform for him there. The decree itself, intended to sanctify the island, ordains the following: offerings of milk should be presented to Osiris on a regular basis; 365 offering tables should be set up for him on the island with libations of water poured out on them each day; the divine cult should be performed for him daily by the great priest who is on monthly duty, while the libation pourer of Isis mistress of Philae has responsibility for the rites of libation; the beating of tambourines and the playing of harps and flutes is banned; no man is allowed to trespass on the territory of the Abaton, in particular, those of lowly rank; hunting birds and catching fish in its vicinity are strictly prohibited; no one must make loud noises there when Isis visits to pour out libations for Osiris at his tomb at ten-day intervals; and the image of the goddess should be transported to the island from Philae in a bark on the occasion of particular festivals. The decree concludes with a notice to the effect that it was recorded by Thoth himself and subscribed to by Re, Shu, and Geb.[206]

The second decree, inscribed on the south wall, begins with the words 'Rite of bringing the *ba* of Osiris to its place'. The purpose of this rite, so the text explains, is to ensure that the *ba* of the god comes and rests upon his corpse on the pure island (scil. Bigga) in the form of a divine falcon with a human head. The *ba* should alight upon the trees of the grove surrounding the tomb of Osiris while Isis and Nephthys are before him and Amun-Re and Thoth praise him. The decree proper follows. It is essentially an abbreviated version of the first decree, but provides some interesting variants for some of its provisions. For example, it specifies that the image of Isis should be transported to the island in a bark from Philae on every fitting occasion during the year, and especially on the twelfth day of Epiph (= 6 July), accompanied by Horus the protector of his father. The second decree concludes with the same injunctions banning the playing of musical instruments, forbidding people to trespass on the island, and prohibiting hunting and fishing that we find in the first one.[207]

The consequences of violating these injunctions are recorded in a papyrus of the Ptolemaic Period, now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (P. Dodgson). This records a divine judgement rendered on 21 Khoiak, in the middle of the Osiris mysteries, against a man called Petarensnuphis who was guilty of various acts of impiety against that god. These include drinking wine that should have been offered to Osiris, behaving irreverently during the rites of mourning conducted for him on the

[205] H. Junker, *Das Götterdekret über das Abaton* (Vienna, 1913); Cauville and Ali, *Philae*, pp. 268–9.
[206] Junker, *Das Götterdekret über das Abaton*, pp. 1–25. [207] Ibid., pp. 25–31.

Abaton, and making loud noises and causing singers to sing there, thus waking up the *ba* of Osiris. As punishment, he is banned from further participation in the god's rites until he has expurgated his sins. To mark his estrangement from the sphere of divinity his name, which means 'He whom (the god) Arensnuphis gave', is abbreviated to Petra, deleting the element of it which refers to the deity.[208]

A prominent theme in hymns to Osiris at Philae is the god's royal status, in particular, his universal kingship. Allusion to this is made, for example, in the hymn that introduces the first of the two decrees described above. Another hymn where the royal status of Osiris is emphasized is inscribed on the outer lintel and north door jamb of the western doorway in room 5 in the main temple of Isis.[209] This dates from the reign of Ptolemy II, and accompanies a representation of the bark of Sokar with a winged solar disk above it.[210] The earliest versions of this hymn go back to the twenty-sixth dynasty. One of these, inscribed in the chapel of Osiris lord of eternity at Karnak, has already been cited in section 6.12.1 as evidence for the growing importance of the conception of Osiris as ruler of both the living and the dead in the first half of the first millennium.[211] A scene on one of the architraves of the pronaos of the temple of Isis emphasizes Osiris's universal kingship over the sky, the two lands, and the underworld.[212] Hieroglyphic inscriptions from the island of Bigga likewise stress the status of that god as ruler over everything.[213]

7.2.3. Graffiti as evidence for the cult of Osiris at Philae

One of the most important sources of information about the cult of Osiris at Philae is the corpus of graffiti left by visitors and priests on the walls of the temple of Isis and other structures on the island.[214] Griffith recorded and published 450 of the better preserved demotic ones, while noting that he had omitted many that were too imperfectly preserved or of too little interest to merit publication.[215] Cruz-Uribe claims that he has discovered a further 534 demotic graffiti on Philae.[216] It is likely that many

[208] For the text, see F. de Cenival, 'Le Papyrus Dodgson (P. Ashmolean Museum Oxford 1932–1159). Une interrogation aux portes des dieux?', *RdE* 38 (1987), pp. 3–11.

[209] L. Žabkar, 'A Hymn to Osiris Pantocrator at Philae', *ZÄS* 108 (1981), pp. 141–71.

[210] For the significance of the latter, see section 5.9.2.

[211] See C. Traunecker, 'La chapelle d'Osiris "seigneur de l'éternité-*neheh*" à Karnak', in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 164–72.

[212] L. Coulon, 'Une trinité d'Osiris thébains d'après un relief découvert à Karnak', in C. Thiers, *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 1 (Montpellier, 2009), pp. 12–14.

[213] e.g. A. Blackman, *The Temple of Bîgeh* (Cairo, 1915), pp. 4, 21–2, and 42.

[214] For overviews of these, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 175–92; Rutherford in Frankfurter (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, pp. 235–50.

[215] F. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus* (Oxford, 1935–7). Note especially his comments on pp. 6–7.

[216] E. Cruz-Uribe, 'The Death of Demotic Redux: Pilgrimage, Nubia and the Preservation of Egyptian Culture', in Knuf, Leitz, and von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, p. 499; E. Cruz-Uribe, *The Demotic Graffiti from the Temple of Isis on Philae Island* (Atlanta, 2016), p. 2.

of these are Griffith's rejects. There are also more than 300 Greek graffiti,[217] a handful of Latin ones, and some in hieratic, hieroglyphs, and Meroitic as well.[218]

The graffiti are of special importance because they allow us to trace the history of cultic activity at Philae well beyond the time when the evidence from other sites runs out. Of the 984 demotic graffiti from that site published by Griffith and Cruz-Uribe, 48 definitely refer to the god Osiris,[219] and two may do.[220] To these we can add a further pair of demotic graffiti from the island of Bigga and three more from Maharraqa that definitely mention Osiris,[221] as well as another from Dakka that may do,[222] giving us a total of at least 53, and possibly as many as 56, demotic graffiti from the first cataract region and lower Nubia that make reference to that god. One semi-hieratic graffito from Philae refers to Osiris as well.[223] Of the 322 published Greek graffiti from the island, only two mention that deity by name.[224] A further eight refer to Sarapis, by which appellation Osiris is clearly meant.[225] Only three of these date to the Roman Period, however, and they are all from the reign of Augustus.

Twenty of the demotic graffiti from Philae that refer to Osiris are dated to a specific year in the reign of a named ruler. One of these was written in the first century AD,[226] seven in the second century,[227] seven in the third century,[228] and five in the fourth century.[229] One demotic graffito is dated in year 6 of an unnamed king, another in year 10 of a ruler only identified as Caesar, and a third in year 16 'of the great gods'.[230] In such cases the dating formula is too vague to permit the text to be attributed to a specific reign. One of the Greek graffiti that mention Osiris is undated, but may have been written in the mid-third century AD.[231] The other was written on 20 December AD 452, making it the latest Philae text to refer to that deity by name.[232]

[217] É. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 1 (Paris, 1969); É. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2 (Paris, 1969).

[218] Griffith includes the hieratic and hieroglyphic graffiti in his publication. For the Latin and Meroitic graffiti, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 182 note 24, and literature cited there. The distinctive features of the latter are analysed by Rutherford in Frankfurter (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, pp. 242–8, 252, and 254–5. Christian graffiti, which post-date the period under consideration now, are described in Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 333–8.

[219] These are (using Griffith's designations) Ph. 85, 120, 254, 258, 264, 266–9, 271–3, 276–7, 279, 289–90, 298, 301, 306, 310–11, 317, 319–20, 322, 331, 334, 341, 344, 350, 357, 368–72, 388–91, 393, 416, 428, 433, 436, and 440, to which add GPH 1006 (Cruz-Uribe, *The Demotic Graffiti from the Temple of Isis on Philae Island*, pp. 280 and 283), a demotic label accompanying a crude representation of that god.

[220] Ph. 342 and 447. [221] Bija 1 and 8, Mah. 3–5. [222] Dak. 12.

[223] Ph. 361. [224] Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2, nos. 183 and 197.

[225] Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 1, nos. 3, 5, 6, 16, and 85; Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2, nos. 150, 158, and 249. That Sarapis is being used as an alternative name for Osiris in these texts is particularly evident in no. 158, which invokes the former as 'the one who dwells in the land opposite (Philae), the most venerable Abaton' (ibid., pp. 128–9).

[226] Ph. 264. [227] Ph. 266–8, 271–2, 276, and 433.

[228] Ph. 269, 273, 301, 310–11, 317, and 416. [229] Ph. 369–72 and 436.

[230] Ph. 277, 298, and 320. [231] See Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2, p. 201.

[232] Ibid., p. 238.

Several of the demotic texts express the hope that the writer's name/good name will endure before Osiris, or before Osiris and one or more other divinities, in the place where it was written. This is similar to the hope expressed in some of the texts inscribed on mummy labels from the Akhmim region discussed in section 7.1.3. One graffito expresses the wish that the *ba* of the Osiris of NN (thus a deceased person) and those of his children might live in the presence of Osiris.[233] Again, this is a formula known from mummy labels and related texts. Many graffiti record acts of worship (demotic *wšte*) performed by their writers in the presence of Osiris. Others contain prayers or requests for favours and assistance from the god,[234] or invoke his name in curses directed against anyone who might obliterate what they have written.[235]

A few graffiti record the titles of individuals who were associated with Osiris, for example, a priest of Osiris lord of Abydos,[236] and a transport captain of Isis of Philae and Osiris of the Abaton.[237] A number of others describe how their writers performed various activities on behalf of Osiris: making or gilding his statues,[238] fashioning a libation vessel of gold for him,[239] carrying out his work or business,[240] and conducting his cult services.[241] It is likely that most of these were written by priests or other members of the temple staff. Some of the graffiti in question are dated in the month of Khoiak, especially the second half of that month when the annual mysteries of Osiris were celebrated, so it is likely that the writers were involved with these.[242] The fact that a number of them were inscribed in or immediately outside the Osiris chamber where the god's rites were conducted supports this suggestion.[243] Some even refer to performing the act of 'sprinkling' (*tḫb*), in other words, watering the small figure of Osiris that was the focal point of the mysteries to enable the grain inside it to germinate.[244] The writer of one graffito states that he refrained from sprinkling out of fear for Isis and dread of Osiris,[245] so presumably this was not a task to be undertaken lightly.

[233] Bīja 1. [234] Ph. 273, 290, 301, 319, 344, and 372.
[235] Ph. 269. Cf. Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 191.
[236] Ph. 428. [237] Ph. 388. [238] Ph. 254 and 317. [239] Ph. 416.
[240] Ph. 289, 301, 310, and 322. Cruz-Uribe, *The Demotic Graffiti from the Temple of Isis on Philae Island*, p. 30, misreads *ḥb n Wsir* in these texts as *ḥb n Wsir* and translates 'festival of Osiris'.
[241] Ph. 273 and 369–72.
[242] For demotic graffiti from Philae mentioning Osiris that were written during this month, see Ph. 120 (11 Khoiak), 266 (24 Khoiak), 271 (5 Khoiak), 276 (25 Khoiak), 290 (21 Khoiak), 369 (21 Khoiak), 370 (20 Khoiak), 372 (Khoiak, no day indicated), 416 (1 Khoiak), and possibly 371 (15 Hathor, perhaps a mistake for 15 Khoiak). Demotic graffiti from Philae dated in the month of Khoiak that do not mention that god are listed in Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus*, pp. 197–8. One of the two Greek graffiti that mention Osiris was written on 23 Khoiak. See Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2, p. 238.
[243] For the demotic graffiti inscribed in these locations, see the plan in Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus*, p. 101. Osiris is mentioned in five of them: Ph. 368–72. All but the last of these are in the Osiris chamber itself.
[244] Ph. 273, 290, 300, 310–11, 317, and 369–72. For the correct interpretation of the verb *tḫb* in these texts, see Colin, *BIFAO* 103 (2003), pp. 79–81.
[245] Ph. 289.

The nature of the graffiti at Philae and the places where they were inscribed underwent some changes over time.[246] In terms of numbers, they reach a peak in the third century AD and decline sharply thereafter.[247] Graffiti expressing the wish that the name of the writer might endure tend to be earlier than those recording acts of worship.[248] Furthermore, whereas the earlier graffiti are found on practically all the main structures on the island, the later ones cluster closer to the temple of Isis.[249] The earlier graffiti often record visits to the island made by pilgrims. Whereas in the Ptolemaic Period, these came from Egypt, North Africa, Crete, Greece, Asia Minor, and Nubia, pilgrims of the Roman Period only came from Egypt and Nubia.[250] The later graffiti, by contrast, are more concerned with priests and other members of the temple staff. The purpose of these was to document their presence in the temple, marking their territory, publicizing their right of access, and proclaiming the fact that they were performing their duties in the prescribed manner.[251]

These graffiti give the impression that, despite some contraction and increased isolation after the third century AD, important Osirian rites like the Khoiak mysteries and the transport of the statue of Isis from Philae to Bigga at ten-day intervals were still going on during the time when they were written.[252] The picture of Osiris that one gains from them is consistent with what one finds in the hieroglyphic inscriptions from Philae. A number of them refer to him in conjunction with Isis and Horus. They call him the great god, Pharaoh Osiris, Pharaoh of the entire land, Pharaoh Osiris Wennefer, great god of the entire land, lord of Abydos, and Osiris of the Abaton, among other epithets.[253] Thus the conception of Osiris as ruler is prominent in the graffiti as well.

Some of the requests addressed to the god in these texts pertain to the afterlife, for example, the wish that the *ba* of a person might live in his presence,[254] or that Osiris might perform a boon for one of the writer's relatives, such as granting them eternal well-being and rejuvenation,[255] or giving them cool water.[256] All of these are very traditional.[257] But other requests pertain to this world. Thus we find entreaties that the

[246] See Rutherford in Frankfurter (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, pp. 250–6.
[247] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 182–3.
[248] Ibid., pp. 187–90.
[249] Ibid., pp. 183–5; Rutherford in Frankfurter (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, p. 253.
[250] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 186–7; Rutherford in Frankfurter (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, p. 239.
[251] Thus the presence of a graffito in a particular area of a temple does not mean that the area in question was no longer in active use, contra E. Cruz-Uribe, 'The Death of Demotic at Philae, a Study in Pilgrimage and Politics', in T. Bács (ed.), *A Tribute to Excellence: Studies Offered in Honor of Ernö Gaál, Ulrich Luft, and Lászlo Török* (Budapest, 2002), pp. 179–80; E. Cruz-Uribe, *Hibis Temple Project 3: The Graffiti from the Temple Precinct* (San Antonio, 2008), pp. 218–24; and Cruz-Uribe, *The Demotic Graffiti from the Temple of Isis on Philae Island*, pp. 32–3.
[252] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 204–8 and 215.
[253] Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus*, p. 203.
[254] Bīja 1. [255] Ph. 273. [256] Ph. 290, 301, and 372.
[257] For Osiris as a source of cool water, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 205–6; J. Quack, 'Zum ägyptischen Ritual im Iseum Campense in Rom', in C. Metzner-Nebelsick (ed.), *Rituale in der Vorgeschichte, Antike und Gegenwart* (Rahden, 2003), pp. 61–2; and D. Delia, 'The Refreshing Water of Osiris', *JARCE* 29 (1992), pp. 181–9. As noted in section 7.2.2, the Nile inundation was regarded as

god might answer prayers, do what is in the suppliant's heart, give him strength,[258] and grant him a long lifetime.[259] As these demonstrate, the writers of the graffiti regard Osiris not just as a ruler of the dead, but a ruler of the living as well.

7.2.4. The last worshippers of Osiris at Philae

The latest demotic graffito from the island of Philae to mention Osiris was written on 24 August AD 394, a date which it says is the birthday of Osiris.[260] Thereafter, nine other dated graffiti, eight demotic and one Greek, were written by priests at Philae or refer to cultic activity there, but without mentioning the god. These range in date from 394 to 11 December AD 452.[261] Four were written in the month of Khoiak, but all in the first half.[262] Two of these, and a third which is not dated to a specific month, were inscribed at the entrance of the Osiris chamber.[263] The latest reference to cultic activity for Osiris at Philae occurs in a Greek graffito which records an act of worship (*proskynema*) made by Smetkhem son of Pakhoumios, who says that he came and fulfilled his duty with Smeto his brother.[264] The two of them give thanks to their mistress Isis and their master Osiris 'for the good'.[265] The text was written at the entrance of the Osiris chamber on 23 Khoiak in year 169 of the era of Diocletian (= 20 December AD 452).[266] The latest securely dated graffito from Philae to refer to any sort of pagan priest or cultic activity was written in Greek in year 173 of the era of Diocletian (= AD 456/457) on the eastern exterior wall of the naos of the temple of Isis. The preserved portion of this simply says that when Smet was archprophet, Pasnous son of Pakhumios was first president (πρωτοκλίναρχος) of the (cult) association. The remainder of the text is too damaged to permit a coherent translation.[267]

It would appear that many of the writers of latest graffiti from Philae were members of the same family, and one wonders how far outside this family worship of deities like Osiris and Isis extended. The activities of the family in question can be traced over

the efflux of Osiris. In the first cataract region, where the source of the Upper Egyptian inundation was thought to lie, the request for cool water from that god would have had a particular resonance.

[258] Ph. 344. [259] Ph. 273. Cf. Ph. 254.

[260] Ph. 436, inscribed on the north wall of Hadrian's gateway.

[261] Ph. 159 (AD 394), 364 (407–8), 376 (408–9), 240 (27 November 435), 366 (ditto), 332 (25 February 439), 450 (4 April 439), and 365 (2 December 452); Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2, p. 235, no. 196 (11 December 452).

[262] Ph. 240 (1 Khoiak), 366 (ditto), and 365 (6 Khoiak); Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2, p. 235, no. 196 (15 Khoiak).

[263] Ph. 364–6. [264] Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2, p. 238, no. 197.

[265] Cf. Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 189, for this expression.

[266] For this dating system, which uses the beginning of the reign of Diocletian (AD 284) as its starting point, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 151 and 190, and literature cited there. It was probably employed at Philae because Diocletian was the last emperor to take a substantial interest in the island and the area around it (cf. ibid., pp. 27–31).

[267] Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques de Philae* 2, pp. 248–51 and plate 62, no. 199; Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 213–14.

three generations.[268] They have Egyptian names, and some have names associated specifically with the first cataract region, so they give the appearance of being local.[269] One wonders, nevertheless, why some graffiti say that they came to Philae to perform their cultic duties.[270] Did they live there all the time or did they live elsewhere (e.g. further to the south) and come to Philae only on the occasion of specific religious festivals like the Khoiak mysteries? Some think that, despite their Egyptian names, the members of this family really functioned more as priests for those tribes living to the south of the Egyptian border, who appear to have retained the old faith longer than those living in Egypt itself.[271]

The fifth-century historian and politician Priscus records a treaty made by a Roman delegation of which he was a member with two Nubian-based tribes, the Blemmyes and the Noubades, in 452/3. The terms of this allowed members of those tribes to cross to the temple of Isis at Philae unhindered, although Egyptians retained charge of the boat in which the statue of the goddess was ferried across the river. At certain times, they were permitted to take the statue to their own country, consult it, and bring it back.[272] The provisions of this treaty probably confirmed privileges that had been conferred by earlier ones, since its guarantee of access to Philae is said to be 'in accordance with ancient right'. A graffito of third century date at Dakka refers to 'the ferrying of Isis the great goddess' by Meroitic priests on 22 Epiph.[273] A demotic graffito at Philae written in November or December 373 may allude to an occasion when the bark of Isis crossed

[268] Ibid., pp. 195 and 197–201. As Dijkstra shows there, attempts to reconstruct two further generations of this family are based on the erroneous assumption that Griffith's Ph. 365 is a single graffito, and that the two men mentioned in lines 4 and 5 of it are the father and grandfather of the woman mentioned at the end of line 3. In fact lines 4 and 5 are part of a separate text written in a different hand. Cruz-Uribe has published a copy of a damaged demotic graffito from the temple of Isis (his GPH 626) which he restores to read *Ḥr-[pa-ỉst] s; Ḥr-pa-ỉst s; Ns-mt-[ꜥ;]*, 'Hor[paese] son of Horpaese son of Smet[o]', identifying the first named individual as a previously unknown son of the Horpaese son of Smeto who was a member of the third generation of the family under discussion. See Cruz-Uribe in Knuf, Leitz, and von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, p. 503 and plate 89; Cruz-Uribe, *The Demotic Graffiti from the Temple of Isis on Philae Island*, pp. 106–7 and 113. If correct, this would add a fourth generation to the family. Cruz-Uribe's reading is problematic in a number of respects, however. The initial sign of the first name does not look like *Ḥr*, there is too much space in between it and the following *s; Ḥr-pa-ỉst* for *pa-ỉst* to fill on its own, the preserved part of the final name looks nothing like examples of *Ns-mt* in other demotic graffiti from Philae, and the restoration of *ꜥ;* after it is pure conjecture. This renders his reading and interpretation implausible.

[269] The most common name is *Ns-mt*, which means 'The one belonging to the sacred staff', referring to the staff of the god Khnum of Elephantine, which Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 197 and elsewhere, misreads as *ỉs.t-mt*.

[270] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 201; Rutherford in Frankfurter (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, p. 249.

[271] See, for example, Cruz-Uribe in Knuf, Leitz, and von Recklinghausen (eds), *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, pp. 503–4; Cruz-Uribe, *The Demotic Graffiti from the Temple of Isis on Philae Island*, pp. 7–9 and 42–4; Zaki, *Le Premier Nome de Haut-Égypte du IIIe siècle avant J.-C. au VIIe siècle après J.-C. d'après les sources hiéroglyphiques des temples ptolémaïques et romaines*, pp. 382–5.

[272] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 143–5; Rutherford in Frankfurter (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, pp. 234–5 and 248. For the Greek text of Priscus's account, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 355–6.

[273] Dak. 30. Cf. the second decree concerning the Abaton discussed in section 7.2.2, which specifies that the image of Isis should be transported to Bigga by bark from Philae on 12 Epiph.

over to the Abaton after having been absent for a period of two years. If the reading and translation of the relevant lines are correct, perhaps it had been taken away by members of the tribes dwelling to the south.[274]

The evidence of the demotic and Greek graffiti at Philae, combined with the report of Priscus, gives the impression that cultic activity ceased there shortly after the middle of the fifth century.[275] Obviously it did not come to an end immediately after the last graffito referring to such activity was written in 456 or 457, but it is unlikely to have continued much longer thereafter. As we have seen, there is evidence of a gradual contraction of cultic activity at Philae after the third century, and by the fifth century the persistence of the cult is due largely to the efforts of the members of a single family. Dijkstra has observed that these individuals tended to occupy high-ranking priestly positions.[276] This should not be surprising. If a club has only two members, the chances are high that one of them will be president and the other vice-president.

7.2.5. What sort of afterlife did the last devotees of Osiris at Philae envisage?

What did the members of this family of priests think would happen to them after they died? As seen in section 7.2.4, the cult of Osiris at Philae persisted until at least 20 December 452, which is the date when the last graffito referring to the god was written there. But was he still regarded as the god of the dead by that date in the same way that he was earlier? Did his devotees still look to him to provide the same benefits for them in the next world as they did before? Unfortunately we cannot answer these questions with certainty. Evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife at Philae runs out long before the cult of Osiris stops there. The last graffito to request eternal well-being and rejuvenation from the god was written in AD 258/259.[277] The latest one that asks Osiris to provide cool water for the deceased dates to AD 373.[278] Thereafter, the graffiti are silent on subjects pertaining to the next world. Consequently we have no means of obtaining information about the posthumous expectations of that cult's last practitioners. For such information one normally looks to tombs and cemeteries. The only cemeteries near Philae that have been investigated by archaeologists are those on the island of el-Hesa to the southwest of Bigga.[279] The burials found there were all of Ptolemaic or early Roman date, and their contents were severely damaged by water. But the tombs of the last priests of Osiris at Philae still await discovery.

[274] Ph. 371. See Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 151–2, 196, and 207.
[275] Ibid., pp. 215–18. [276] Ibid., p. 215. [277] Ph. 273.
[278] Ph. 372. The writer expresses the hope that Osiris will give cool water to his father and brother in return for the cult service that he has performed.
[279] For these, see G. Reisner, *Archaeological Survey of Nubia: Report for 1907–1908*, volume 1 (Cairo, 1910), pp. 74–92 and plates 10–15; J. Ray, 'A Pious Soldier: Stele Aswan 1057', *JEA* 73 (1987), pp. 169–80 and plate 10.

7.2.6. Later sources for the end of traditional Egyptian religion at Philae

Later sources present pictures of the end of traditional religious cults at Philae that differ considerably from the one that more contemporary evidence provides. It is important to stress the plural 'pictures', since the later accounts are by no means in agreement with each other. Some say that traditional religion came to an end at Philae well before the middle of the fifth century, others that it persisted long after that date. In the first category, we have a Coptic hagiography, the Life of Aaron, preserved in a late tenth-century paper codex now in the British Library. Fragments of a papyrus codex, dating to the sixth or seventh century, preserve part of the same work. On the basis of internal evidence, it is thought that the work itself was composed sometime after 491, perhaps around the middle of the sixth century.[280] In the second category are an account of the wars of Justinian by the Byzantine historian Procopius, completed around 550 or 551, and a petition written by Dioscorus of Aphrodito on behalf of some councillors in the town of Omboi (present-day Kom Ombo) in 567.

7.2.6.1. The Life of Aaron

Aaron was an anchorite who lived in the desert region to the east of Philae. In one section of the text of which he is the protagonist, a disciple of his named Isaac relates the story of the end of paganism on that island as told to him by his master, who in turn heard it from an eyewitness, Macedonius, the first bishop of Philae. According to the account of Macedonius, he heard that idol worshippers were oppressing Christians there and went to inform the Patriarch Athanasius in Alexandria about the situation. In response, Athanasius appointed him as bishop of Philae and sent him south to put matters to rights. One day, on the pretext of wishing to sacrifice to the sacred falcon in the temple there, Macedonius gained access to the cage where the bird was kept and killed it. The priest of the temple vowed to take vengeance, forcing him to flee. After the miraculous healing of a camel's broken leg, however, the priest had a change of heart, prostrated himself before Macedonius, and received baptism from him. The bishop returned to Philae in triumph and converted all the rest of the inhabitants who were not already Christians. As the text says, out of the entire population, 'none were left who were not baptized that day'.[281]

[280] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 225–31 and 329–32; J. Dijkstra, 'Monasticism on the Southern Egyptian Frontier in Late Antiquity: Towards a New Critical Edition of the Coptic *Life of Aaron*', *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 5 (2013), pp. 33–47 (reference courtesy of Edward Love).

[281] For the text, see E.A.W. Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London, 1915), pp. 432–95, especially pp. 443–54 for the section summarized here. There are good analyses of this episode in Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 235–7 and 255–69, and Dijkstra, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 7 (2015), pp. 63–71.

The Life of Aaron is not the only ancient source in which Macedonius is attested. He is listed among the bishops who attended the Council of Serdica in 343.[282] Thus his appointment as the episcopal representative of Philae must have occurred prior to that date. Since we know from the graffiti discussed in section 7.2.4 that traditional Egyptian religion and cults persisted on the island long after the middle of the fourth century, the claim in the Life of Aaron that Macedonius eliminated them when he became bishop is patently false. Thus that work is not a reliable historical source for the end of paganism on Philae, valuable and informative though it may be in other respects.[283]

But why does the author of the text make such a claim? Dijkstra has provided a plausible explanation.[284] According to him, since Macedonius was the first bishop of Philae, the author of the Life of Aaron deemed it appropriate to portray him as the one who put an end to pagan practices on the island. In this way, his tenure of office as bishop could be presented as a new beginning, endowing him and his successors with greater authority and legitimacy, while at the same time providing a narrative of the rise of the Christian community on Philae from pagan origins that would edify later audiences and facilitate the construction of Christian identity there. Thus for literary and rhetorical reasons the more complex reality in which paganism and Christianity co-existed on the island for an extended period of time was suppressed in favour of a simplified version of events.

7.2.6.2. Procopius

The historian Procopius tells a rather different story. The relevant section of his history of the wars of Justinian begins with a description of the measures that an earlier ruler, the Emperor Diocletian, took to consolidate the southern frontier of his empire. According to this, he built strong fortifications on the island of Philae, while establishing shrines and altars there for the joint use of Romans and members of two local tribes, the Blemmyes and Noubades, the same groups mentioned by Priscus. These tribes were also permitted to have their own priests on the island. The purpose of this policy was to promote friendship between them and the Romans, as a token of which Diocletian named the island Philae, meaning 'friends'. Procopius observes that the Blemmyes and Noubades revere 'all the other gods that pagans recognize, as well as Isis and Osiris, and not least Priapus'. He also claims that they sacrifice human beings to the sun. He says that they retained possession of the temples on Philae down to his own day, but then the Emperor Justinian decided to destroy them. Accordingly, the

[282] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 54–5 and 359.

[283] For some of these, see ibid., pp. 253–4; Dijkstra, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 5 (2013), pp. 37–9.

[284] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 253–69 and 329–33; Dijkstra, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 5 (2013), p. 38.

Armenian general Narses who was in command of the troops there destroyed the temples, arrested their priests, and sent their statues to Byzantium.[285]

Justinian reigned from AD 527 to 565. His general Narses, having originally fought on the Persian side against the Byzantines, switched his allegiance in the summer of 530. Thereafter he participated in campaigns in Italy and elsewhere until his death on the eastern frontier in 543. Procopius does not give an exact date for Narses' sojourn on the island of Philae. He was in Italy between 538 and the end of 540. Therefore it must have occurred either between 530 and 538 or between 541 and 542. A religious mission was sent to Nubia sometime between 536 and 548 to promote Christianity. The presence of Narses at Philae could have been connected with this. If so, then he must have been there during or just before the time when it took place. Dijkstra thinks that the period 541–2 would have been too short to permit a journey to Egypt's southern frontier. Thus he places Narses at Philae sometime between 535 and 537.[286]

Taken at face value, the passage of Procopius summarized in the opening paragraph of this section seems to provide evidence for the persistence of the traditional cults at Philae well into the sixth century, and in fact in most modern accounts of the end of paganism in Egypt it is accepted uncritically as such.[287] But virtually every statement made by Procopius that can be checked against other evidence is false. Diocletian did not build fortifications on the island of Philae. Nor did he erect temples or other religious structures there. As we have seen, the only building works attributable to his reign are a quay and gateway at the island's northern end.[288] Nor did Diocletian make it possible for inhabitants of the region south of Philae to participate in the religious cults there. On the contrary, they had enjoyed this privilege for centuries.[289] Nor did he give the island of Philae its name, since this is already attested in earlier Greek and Latin literature, along with the spurious etymology that Procopius provides for it.[290] Finally, and most tellingly, Narses did not destroy the temples on Philae because they are still standing to this day. This shows clearly that the account of Procopius is not a reliable source of historical information.

What about his description of the religion of the Blemmyes and Noubades? This too is difficult to take at face value. Procopius outlines the beliefs of these tribes in vague and confusing terms. In addition to 'all the other gods that pagans recognize', they worship Isis, Osiris, and especially Priapus. They also practice the custom of sacrificing

[285] Procopius, *Pers*. 1.19.34–7. For the Greek text, see Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 355.

[286] See ibid., pp. 295–9, for his reconstruction of events.

[287] See the studies cited ibid., p. 12, to which add M. Stadler, 'On the Demise of Egyptian Writing: Working with a Problematic Source Basis', in J. Baines, J. Bennet, and S. Houston (eds), *The Disappearance of Writing Systems: Perspectives on Literacy and Communication* (London, 2008), pp. 158 and 174; Stadler, *Einführung in die ägyptische Religion ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit nach den demotischen religiösen Texten*, p. 192; Cruz-Uribe, *The Demotic Graffiti from the Temple of Isis on Philae Island*, p. 10; and J. Hahn, 'Die Zerstörung der Kulte von Philae: Geschichte und Legende am ersten Nilkatarakt', in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, pp. 207 and 211–12.

[288] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 27–31.

[289] Ibid., pp. 132–7.

[290] Ibid., p. 143.

people to the sun. By describing their religion in this manner, Procopius represents the Blemmyes and Noubades to his readers as stereotypical barbarians. Their religion is focused on sex and fertility and they indulge in human sacrifice.[291] Thus his description is suspect. Nor can we put much credence in his claim that these tribes retained possession of the temples at Philae as late as the reign of Justinian, since this is contradicted by the evidence of the graffiti, which indicates that cultic activity had already ceased there several decades earlier. So clearly Procopius is not a reliable guide to the religion or cults of the people of the first cataract region either.

To understand why Procopius says the things that he does, it is essential to see his account of the destruction of the temples at Philae in the context of the larger work of which it forms a part.[292] This is one of a number of passages in that work where he portrays Justinian closing or destroying temples, building churches, and converting the populations of barbarian lands to Christianity. Most follow a standard pattern. First, a pagan people with strange customs is described, for example, human sacrifice, mating with asses, selling children as eunuchs, or worshipping groves of trees. Next, Justinian converts them. He destroys or closes their temples, turns them into churches, or else builds completely new places of worship for their use. Then the newly converted pagans abandon their former customs and adopt a more civilized way of life.

In his history of the wars of Justinian, and elsewhere as well, Procopius seeks to present an idealized portrait of the emperor as a bringer of Christianity and, in conjunction with it, civilization. The elaboration of this ideal with as many examples as possible is one of the primary aims of his work. For obvious reasons, pagans are essential to this enterprise, since without them the emperor would have no one to convert. If none are available, then they have to be found somewhere. For this purpose, a vigorous, flourishing pagan cult is preferable, since it renders the emperor's achievement in eradicating it all the more impressive. Thus, from the perspective of a writer like Procopius, historical accuracy is secondary, if not irrelevant. Since Narses did not actually destroy any temples at Philae, what, if anything, did he do there that could have given rise to the report that Procopius provides? Dijkstra suggests that he might have 'symbolically' closed the temples, even though these had been standing empty for decades.[293] Whatever the nature of his actions, it is unlikely that there were any adherents of the island's traditional cults still around to oppose them.

7.2.6.3. The petition of Dioscorus of Aphrodito

The last of the three later sources that we will consider, the petition of Dioscorus of Aphrodito, has been interpreted by some as claiming that those cults persisted even

[291] Ibid., p. 142.

[292] For what follows, see ibid., pp. 272–6 and 279–82; Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, p. 424.

[293] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 217, 282, and 344; Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, p. 426.

longer than Procopius says they did. Dioscorus was a wealthy landowner and notary at the governor's court in Antinoopolis. His petition is preserved in a papyrus now in the Cairo Museum (*P.Cair.Masp.* I 67004).[294] It was written in 567 on behalf of the councillors of the town of Omboi (present-day Kom Ombo) and addressed to Athanasius, the governor of the province in which they lived. In the petition, the councillors complain about the behaviour of an unnamed man whom they accuse of interfering with the tax collection and appropriating the taxes collected for his own use. To blacken his name, all sorts of other charges are added to this one. They accuse him of madness, ignoring the laws, plundering and destroying their houses, stealing their possessions, violating his own granddaughter, melting down imperial Roman army standards to make a golden bracelet for a barbarian slave girl, and, more pertinently from our perspective, setting aside the Christian religion, consecrating shrines with demons and wooden statues, and renewing the temples for the Blemmyes, who had abandoned the practice of idol worship. They beseech the governor to punish this man, whom they vilify as an 'eater of raw meat' and a 'half-barbarian and half-pagan', until he is reduced to a puff of smoke.

The text does not say where the temples it mentions were located. According to Dijkstra, they must be the ones at Philae.[295] This is certainly a plausible interpretation, but we should not exclude the possibility that the petition is referring to the temples along the stretch of the Nile to the south of that island. We have no evidence that any sort of cultic activity went on in these as late as 567, but neither is there any evidence for such activity at Philae at this date. If the petition is referring to the temples there, then we are faced with the question of whether the charges enumerated in it are actually true or whether they are simply made for rhetorical effect. As we saw in section 7.1.9, it was customary in petitions of this nature to say anything that might blacken the name of the one accused, and the sensational nature of many of the accusations made in the petition of Dioscorus, e.g. madness and incest, suggests that they were intended to serve this purpose. They are not germane to the basic charge of misappropriation of taxes, but have been added to shock, to portray the accused as someone who shamelessly contravenes every known standard of acceptable behaviour, even in his diet and eating habits. The same is likely to be true of the accusation concerning the temples, this being only one more part of the larger picture that the petition's author seeks to paint.

If there is some truth in the charges about paganism, however, then this would suggest that as late as 567 there were still people in the first cataract region who had not embraced Christianity. Or rather that, having embraced it, they had lapsed back into idol worship. Did such people still venerate Osiris? It is impossible for us to say, since that god is not mentioned by name in the petition. It is worth noting, nevertheless, that in both the petition of Dioscorus and the account of Procopius, the pagans mentioned are specifically said to be Blemmyes, in others words, people living to the south of

[294] The Greek text is published in Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 351–4. For discussion and analysis of its contents, see ibid., pp. 1–11.

[295] Ibid., p. 10.

Egypt, rather than Egyptians. This is a useful reminder that belief in the traditional Egyptian deities may have survived longer in the region to the south of Egypt than it did in Egypt itself.

7.2.7. Reliability of graffiti vs. later sources as evidence for the end of traditional religion at Philae

To summarise, the evidence of the graffiti incised on the walls of the temples at Philae indicates that belief in Osiris persisted on the island into the early years of the second half of the fifth century AD but came to an end not long thereafter, having already been in decline since the third century. Its disappearance there seems to have been more or less coterminous with that of belief in the other traditional Egyptian deities. Belief in the Osirian afterlife, as distinct from belief in Osiris himself, is not attested at Philae after AD 373, but this may reflect the fact that no tombs or burial equipment belonging to the last worshippers of that god have ever been discovered. Material of this sort might have supplied more information about their aspirations for the hereafter.

Later sources written in Coptic or Greek present different pictures of the end of traditional Egyptian religion at Philae. According to the Life of Aaron it ceased in the first half of the fourth century. The history of Procopius, on the other hand, says that it persisted into the first half of the sixth. The petition of Dioscorus refers to renewed cultic activity at pagan temples as late as the second half of that century, but it is not certain whether the temples in question are the ones at Philae. As we have seen, the information provided by these sources is less reliable than that provided by the graffiti. In the case of the first two, this is because what they say about the end of traditional religion at Philae can be proven false on the basis of incontrovertible textual and archaeological evidence. In the case of the third, although there is no single statement in the petition of Dioscorus that is directly controverted by other evidence, the tendentious nature of the document as a whole is sufficient to bring it under suspicion.

This raises an important point, which has already come up in our consideration of the writings of Shenoute. In assessing the historicity of any source, it is essential to take into account, not only what it says, but why it says this as well. What is the author's objective in writing, what point does he seek to make, what devices does he employ to sway his audience? In the context of early Christian polemic, for example, a man might be branded as a pagan, or even a half-pagan, for reasons that have nothing to do with his religious proclivities. Even a tendentious source can incorporate nuggets of genuine information, for example, details of local colour, but these do not make it more reliable. There was a sacred falcon at Philae, as described in the Life of Aaron, but this does not mean that the account of the end of paganism on that island given by its author is historically accurate. As Dijkstra notes, 'An element in an account may seem "trustworthy" when checked against another source, but it may at the same time be heavily

distorted to fit it into its literary context.'[296] This is a point frequently overlooked by those who seek to exploit texts like the three we have analysed here as sources of historical information.

7.3. ABYDOS

7.3.1. The rise of the cult of Osiris at Abydos

The city of Abydos in the eighth Upper Egyptian nome was an important religious centre long before the initial appearance of Osiris in the historical record, not least because the kings of the first dynasty, and two rulers of the second dynasty, were buried there.[297] The earliest evidence for a connection between Osiris and the eighth Upper Egyptian nome dates to the fifth dynasty. He is not associated with the city of Abydos itself until the sixth dynasty. But there is relatively little evidence for the performance of an actual cult of Osiris there during the Old Kingdom. The pre-eminent local deity at that time was the god Khentiamentiu, whose name means 'Foremost of the westerners'.[298]

It is not until the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom that Osiris really becomes prominent in the textual and archaeological record at Abydos. At the end of the eleventh dynasty the so-called Abydos Formula begins to appear on stelae, and scenes depicting and referring to voyages to Abydos made by the deceased start to appear in tombs.[299] From the twelfth dynasty, we have evidence for a temple of Osiris at Abydos.[300] By this time he had completely absorbed Khentiamentiu and assumed his attributes. The latter's name was now simply an epithet of Osiris.[301] An increasing number of graves, cenotaph chapels, and stelae found at Abydos bear witness to the deceased's desire to enjoy proximity to Osiris and participate in the rites celebrated for him there, a sign of their growing importance.[302] In particular, these sources refer to the god's procession to a place called Poker (Egyptian *Pqr*) or 'the district of Poker' (*W-pqr*). Most people identify this with the early dynastic cemetery of Umm el-Qaab, about 1.7 km southwest of the cultivated area.[303]

[296] Ibid., p. 288. Cf. Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, p. 400.

[297] See sections 2.3.2, 2.4.2, and 2.8.1. For general accounts of the development of Abydos as a religious centre, see D. O'Connor, *Abydos: Egypt's First Pharaohs and the Cult of Osiris* (London, 2009); U. Effland and A. Effland, *Abydos: Tor zur ägyptischen Unterwelt* (Darmstadt and Mainz, 2013).

[298] See section 4.12.1.

[299] Sections 4.9.2 and 4.12.2.

[300] For this monument, see O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 88–9.

[301] See section 4.14.2.

[302] Sections 4.9.2, 4.9.4, and 4.12.2–4.

[303] See A. Leahy, 'A Protective Measure at Abydos in the Thirteenth Dynasty', *JEA* 75 (1989), pp. 57–9; Leitz, *Geographisch-osirianische Prozessionen aus Philae, Dendara und Athribis*, pp. 113–14; P. Koemoth, *Osiris et les arbres: Contribution à l'étude des arbres sacrés de l'Égypte ancienne* (Liège, 1994), p. 245.

7.3.2. The mysteries of Osiris at Abydos

The procession to Poker was a central feature of the mysteries of Osiris, which were celebrated annually during the inundation season. They commemorated, but were also supposed to reify, his restoration to life after he was murdered by his brother Seth. Accordingly, the key episodes of the aftermath of the god's death, his mummification, protection, justification, and burial, were ritually re-enacted. Part of this re-enactment involved transporting a figure of Osiris in his sacred vessel, the *neshmet*-bark, from the god's temple at Kom es-Sultan to Umm el-Qaab via a long wadi. It was within sight of this wadi, in or adjacent to the area known as the terrace of the great god, that the cenotaph chapels and other monuments mentioned in the preceding section were set up, to allow their owners a clear view of the proceedings.[304]

In the Middle and New Kingdoms the mysteries of Osiris were celebrated at Abydos in the first month of the inundation season.[305] In later periods, they took place in the fourth month of that season, Khoiak.[306] This raises the question of how closely related the earlier and later versions of these rites actually are. During the latter, small figures of Osiris and Sokar, with whom Osiris was identified, were fabricated and given a temporary burial. After a year's interment, these figures were replaced with new ones and moved to a permanent resting place. The process was repeated annually, thereby ensuring the god's perpetual renewal.[307] However, there is no evidence for the fabrication of any figures of this type at Abydos during the Middle Kingdom, unless the figure that some texts say was transported in the *neshmet*-bark is to be identified with one of them.

7.3.3. The burial place of Osiris at Umm el-Qaab

Poker was believed to be the burial place of Osiris. His actual tomb within that sacred precinct was called Areq-heh (Egyptian *ʿrq-ḥḥ*).[308] The name has been conjectured to

[304] See section 4.12.4.

[305] J. Quack, 'Reste eines Kultkalenders (Pap. Berlin P. 14472 + Pap. Strasbourg BNU hier. 38 a und Pap. Berlin P. 29065)', in V. Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung: Eine Festgabe für das Neue Museum* (Berlin, 2012), pp. 200–2.

[306] See S. Cauville, *Dendara* 10 (Cairo, 1997), pp. 29–30; S. Cauville, *Dendara: Les chapelles osiriennes* 1 (Cairo, 1997), p. 16; É. Chassinat, *Le mystère d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak* 1 (Cairo, 1966), pp. 248–60.

[307] See Coulon in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 9–12, and references cited there; von Lieven, *RdE* 61 (2010), p. 97 note 35. For the fabrication of the Osiris figure, see also sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3.

[308] This is first attested in a hymn on a stela of the early twelfth dynasty (Glasgow 1922.13) where Osiris is called 'master of the Sacred Land and Areq-heh'. See D. Franke, 'Middle Kingdom Hymns and Other Sundry Religious Texts—An Inventory', in S. Meyer (ed.), *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World/Ägypten—Tempel der gesamten Welt* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), pp. 103–4; W.M.F. Petrie, *Tombs of the Courtiers and Oxyrhynkhos* (London, 1925), p. 10 and plate 24. For Areq-heh as the permanent resting place of the Osiris figures at Abydos, see Leitz, *Geographisch-osirianische Prozessionen aus Philae, Dendara und Athribis*, p. 114; Chassinat, *Le mystère d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak* 1, p. 249.

mean 'that which encompasses millions' or 'the end of millions'.[309] One particular early dynastic tomb at Umm el-Qaab, originally constructed for the first dynasty ruler Djer, was identified as his sepulchre.[310] There is evidence that this tomb was repaired and made accessible in the Middle Kingdom.[311] Inside it, Amélineau discovered a black basalt statue depicting Osiris lying on a lion bed. The date of this is disputed, with suggestions ranging from the Old Kingdom to the thirtieth dynasty.[312] Leahy has presented cogent arguments for assigning it to the reign of the thirteenth dynasty ruler Khendjer.[313] A stela dating to the same dynasty records a royal decree forbidding anyone to walk on the processional way from the Osiris temple to Poker except priests who are on duty, on pain of death by burning. It says that any official who builds a tomb in this area will be punished in the same way, as will the necropolis guard who allows this to happen.[314]

The harsh punishments prescribed in this decree show how sacrosanct the way leading to the burial place of Osiris must have been, and how closely access to his tomb was restricted, which is also reflected in the relatively small amount of votive pottery that has been found at Umm el-Qaab dating to the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period.[315] Judging from the pottery, however, there was a great increase in cultic activity at that site during the New Kingdom, in particular, during the nineteenth dynasty.[316] This coincided with a more general interest in Abydos shown by kings like Seti I and Ramesses II, both of whom built memorial temples there. Seti also built another sacred structure behind his temple, the so-called Osireion.[317]

[309] If the second interpretation is correct, the name could have reference to the number of enemies slain at the tomb of Osiris by the goddess Tefnut. See É. Chassinat, *Le temple d'Edfou* 7 (Cairo, 1932), p. 14, lines 6–7.

[310] Leahy, *JEA* 75 (1989), pp. 55–7; U. Effland, 'Das Gottesgrab: Der Gott Osiris in Umm el-Qaab/Abydos', *Sokar* 16 (2008), pp. 6–17; Effland and Effland, *Abydos*, pp. 14–15.

[311] V. Müller, 'Archäologische Relikte kultischer Aktivitäten in Umm el-Qaʿab/Abydos', in J. Mylonopoulos and H. Roeder (eds), *Archäologie und Ritual: Auf der Suche nach der rituellen Handlung in den antiken Kulturen Ägyptens und Griechenlands* (Vienna, 2006), p. 38.

[312] U. Effland, J. Budka, and A. Effland, 'Studien zum Osiriskult in Umm el-Qaab/Abydos—Ein Vorbericht', *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 34–5.

[313] A. Leahy, 'The Osiris "Bed" Reconsidered', *Orientalia* 46 (1977), pp. 424–34. For pictures of the bed *in situ*, see É. Amélineau, *Le tombeau d'Osiris: Monographie de la découverte faite en 1897–1898* (Paris, 1899), plates 2–4.

[314] Leahy, *JEA* 75 (1989), pp. 41–54.

[315] See Müller in Mylonopoulos and Roeder (eds), *Archäologie und Ritual*, p. 45; Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 39, 55, and 58; Effland and Effland, *Abydos*, p. 17. A general survey of the votive pottery from Umm el-Qaab is provided in J. Budka, 'Votivgaben für Osiris', *Sokar* 29 (2014), pp. 56–65.

[316] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 56–9 and 63.

[317] For New Kingdom building activity at Abydos, see O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 104–19; Effland and Effland, *Abydos*, pp. 21–55. A hieratic graffito of the twenty-second dynasty describes the Osireion as 'the underworld crypt of king Menmaatre'. See H. Frankfort, *The Cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos* (London, 1933), p. 88 and plate 88, no. 3.

7.3.4. The cult of Osiris at Abydos during the Late Period

The cult of Osiris at Abydos continued to be very important in the first millennium BC, especially under the rulers of the twenty-sixth dynasty, as evidenced by the remains of monuments inscribed with the names of Apries and Amasis, as well as the inscription on a statue belonging to an official called Peftjauawineith who served under both kings. This records how he refurbished the temple of the god there.[318] A limestone door jamb inscribed with the name and image of Apries was discovered at Umm el-Qaab itself, along with other limestone fragments bearing the cartouche of Amasis.[319] The amount of votive pottery deposited there reaches its peak around the same time, but declines sharply after the end of the twenty-sixth dynasty.[320]

There was some disruption to the cults at Abydos in the aftermath of the Persian conquest of Egypt in 526 BC, and a number of monuments there suffered damage. The name of Amasis is effaced on several extant blocks from the site, and it was probably the Persians who were responsible for this vandalism.[321] The inscription on a statue of a thirtieth dynasty general (MMA 1996.91) makes reference to 'the misery (*ỉḥ*) which the foreigners inflicted' in Abydos and describes how he took steps to ameliorate this, providing the temple of Osiris there with the equipment needed to allow the god's cult to function again. Among other benefactions, he mentions a mold of Sokar for use in the Khoiak mysteries.[322] A contemporary stela belonging to an overseer of singers describes how he re-established music in the temple of Osiris after it had been found in ruins.[323] As a result of such efforts, the cults at Abydos enjoyed a revival during the thirtieth dynasty, when the temple of Osiris was rebuilt for the last time.[324]

7.3.5. The cult of Osiris at Abydos in the Ptolemaic Period

The importance of Osiris at Abydos is also evident in the Ptolemaic Period. But a number of new developments indicate that the site was beginning to be used in different ways. As noted in section 7.3.4, the amount of votive pottery found at Umm el-Qaab decreases drastically after the end of the twenty-sixth dynasty. Virtually none dating to the Persian Period has been discovered there, while pottery of the

[318] See Effland and Effland, *Abydos*, pp. 56–92; O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 120–35; Klotz, *BIFAO* 110 (2010), pp. 127–35; Klotz, *Ancient Society* 40 (2010), pp. 202–3. For the statue inscription of Peftjauawineith, see A. Leahy, 'The Date of Louvre A.93', *Göttinger Miszellen* 70 (1984), pp. 45–58; Klotz, *Ancient Society* 40 (2010), p. 203 note 26, with additional bibliography.

[319] Leahy, *Göttinger Miszellen* 70 (1984), pp. 49–50.

[320] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 54, 56–7, and 63.

[321] Klotz, *Ancient Society* 40 (2010), p. 203; Klotz, *BIFAO* 110 (2010), pp. 131–2.

[322] Ibid., pp. 147–51.

[323] K. Jansen-Winkeln, 'Beiträge zu den Privatinschriften der Spätzeit', *ZÄS* 125 (1998), pp. 12–13; Klotz, *BIFAO* 110 (2010), pp. 136–7.

[324] See O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 128–9; Klotz, *BIFAO* 110 (2010), p. 136; Klotz, *Ancient Society* 40 (2010), p. 203 note 28, and literature cited there.

thirtieth dynasty constitutes only 2 per cent of the total recovered to date.[325] There is even less from the Ptolemaic Period (0.5 per cent of the total),[326] which suggests that there was no longer as much interest in Umm el-Qaab as there had been previously. The only object of any significance from this period found there is a fragmentary Greek horned altar, tentatively dated to the second or third century BC. It is impossible to say where this originally stood, since its constituent pieces were found scattered over a wide area.[327]

Non-human burials are already attested at Abydos in the early dynastic period,[328] but cemeteries for animals and birds began to proliferate there in the Ptolemaic Period or slightly before. Species buried in these cemeteries include ibises, falcons, cats, dogs, shrews, snakes, and scarab beetles, with ibis mummies being the most common.[329] Occasionally earlier monuments, for example, the cultic enclosure of the second dynasty king Khasekhemwi, were re-used as burial places for these creatures.[330] A private tomb of the Third Intermediate Period was converted into a sepulchre for dogs, cats, and goats. The tomb itself had been adapted from a New Kingdom cultic structure.[331] This is not the only instance of re-use of an earlier monument for human burials. In another case, a large mud brick family tomb was cut into a cultic enclosure built by the first dynasty ruler Aha.[332] This in turn was subsequently re-used as a dwelling place.[333]

By the Ptolemaic Period, the temple of Seti I was attracting considerable numbers of visitors who left graffiti commemorating their visits on its walls, mainly in Greek.[334] The earliest graffiti there actually date to the sixth century BC, but the majority are Ptolemaic or Roman.[335] Five of these are addressed to or name Osiris as the object of the visit.[336] A larger number, fifteen in total, invoke or mention Sarapis,[337] occasionally in conjunction with Isis.[338] As we saw in section 6.10.3, Sarapis is used as an alternative

[325] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 57 and 63.

[326] Ibid., p. 57.

[327] Ibid., pp. 24–5.

[328] Cf. the lions buried in a subsidiary grave associated with the tomb of Aha, the initial ruler of the first dynasty, discussed in L. Bestock, *The Development of Royal Funerary Cult at Abydos: Two Funerary Enclosures from the Reign of Aha* (Wiesbaden, 2009), p. 29.

[329] See S. Ikram, 'Animals in the Ritual Landscape at Abydos: A Synopsis', in Z. Hawass and J. Richards (eds), *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt: Essays in Honor of David B. O'Connor* 1 (Cairo, 2007), pp. 417–32; L. Bestock, 'Brown University Abydos Project: Preliminary Report on the First Two Seasons', *JARCE* 48 (2012), pp. 58–73.

[330] Ibid., p. 67; Ikram in Hawass and Richards (eds), *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 425–8; M. Pouls-Wegner, 'New Fieldwork at Abydos: The Toronto Votive Zone Project', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 75 (2012), p. 183.

[331] Ibid., pp. 181–3.

[332] Bestock, *JARCE* 48 (2012), pp. 37 and 48–57.

[333] Ibid., pp. 75–6.

[334] See P. Perdrizet and G. Lefebvre, *Les graffites grecs du Memnonion d'Abydos* (Nancy, Paris, and Strasbourg, 1919); I. Rutherford, 'Pilgrimage in Greco-Roman Egypt: New Perspectives on Graffiti from the Memnonion at Abydos', in R. Matthews and C. Roemer (eds), *Ancient Perspectives on Egypt* (London, 2003), pp. 171–89.

[335] Ibid., pp. 177–80.

[336] PL (= Perdrizet and Lefebvre, see note 334) 74, 107, 377, 625, and 629.

[337] PL 32, 38, 53, 93, 95, 97, 100–1, 136, 146, 181, 407, 444, 535, and 583.

[338] PL 181, 535, and 583.

name for Osiris in cases like this. The earliest Greek graffiti at Abydos to mention that god are from the second century BC. A number of them are dated in the month of Khoiak, which suggests that their writers had come there specifically to participate in the mysteries of Osiris that were celebrated at that time.[339]

7.3.6. The cult of Osiris at Abydos in the Roman Period

Some notable new developments occur in the Roman Period as well. The relationship between Osiris and the deceased continues to be attested by funerary stelae from Abydos.[340] The texts on these stelae are normally written in demotic or Greek. More rarely, hieroglyphs are used. Some stelae display combinations of more than one script or language. Those written in Egyptian contain wishes that the *ba* of the deceased might live, be rejuvenated, or go to the underworld before Osiris (also called Osiris Wennefer or Osiris-Sokar), or that their names might endure in the presence of that god.[341] The text on one stela, now in Berlin, records a complaint addressed to Osiris by a man who says that he was murdered and thrown into a canal although he had done nothing wrong.[342] Stelae inscribed in Greek provide biographical information about the deceased, but do not normally include religious formulas. Where they do mention a deity, it is Sarapis, which in this context is simply another name for Osiris.[343] Most of the stelae are decorated with scenes. A high proportion of them show the deceased interacting with Osiris, either being presented to him by Anubis, censing and pouring out libations to him, or else standing before him and making a gesture of adoration.[344]

However, to judge from the scarcity of pottery, cultic activity at Umm el-Qaab had come to an end by this time. The amount of pottery from the Roman Period found there is actually less than that from the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period, when anyone who even set foot on the way leading to Umm el-Qaab risked the punishment of death by fire.[345] The idea that the site was no longer used for cultic activities is supported by the fact that in the Roman Period the portion of the previously sacrosanct processional way leading to Umm el-Qaab between the north

[339] Rutherford in Matthews and Roemer (eds), *Ancient Perspectives on Egypt*, pp. 180 and 189 note 16.

[340] For a representative selection of examples, see Spiegelberg, *CGC: Die demotischen Inschriften*, nos. 31087, 31097, 31102, 31106, 31116, 31119, 31121, 31122, 31131, 31132, 31134, 31135, 31138, 31140, and 31159; A. Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt* (Liverpool, 1992), pp. 17–70, nos. 1–172.

[341] Ibid., pp. 120–3.

[342] W. Spiegelberg, 'Neue demotische Inschriften', *ZÄS* 45 (1908), pp. 97–8 and plate 3 (Berlin 18862); Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt*, pp. 76–7.

[343] Ibid., pp. 119–20. For the equation of Osiris and Sarapis at Abydos, see sections 6.10.2 and 6.10.3.

[344] For the repertoire of scenes on these stelae, see Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt*, pp. 99–115.

[345] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 54–5 and 57.

and middle cemeteries began to be used as a cemetery itself. It is from this cemetery that many of the stelae described in the preceding paragraph originate.[346]

7.3.7. Was the burial place of Osiris moved from Umm el-Qaab to the Osireion of Seti I?

So belief in Osiris persists into the Roman Period at Abydos, but Umm el-Qaab is no longer important. What happened? There is some evidence to suggest that by this time, if not earlier, the tomb of Osiris had been relocated elsewhere, perhaps in the Osireion as O'Connor has proposed.[347] The evidence in question comes from hieratic and demotic papyri of the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, which speak of reaching the tomb by boat or refer to its great trees. Such references are difficult to explain if it was situated a considerable distance from the cultivation. In P. Harkness, for instance, the deceased is told 'You will moor at Areq-heh.'[348] As noted in section 7.3.3, Areq-heh was the name of the actual tomb of Osiris within the sacred precinct of Poker. In a spell in the Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden, the recitant says 'I am Horus son of Isis who goes on board at Areq-heh to put wrapping on the amulets, to give linen to the drowned one' (scil. Osiris).[349] Another spell in the same papyrus makes reference to the boat and the pool of the Poker district.[350] In P. Berlin 8351, the deceased is told 'Your *ba* will walk about beneath the great trees of the Poker district' and 'Water will be poured out for you at these 365 offering tables which are beneath the great trees of the Poker district.'[351]

To be sure, similar references occur in texts of earlier periods.[352] The inscription of Peftjauawineith says that he dug a pool and planted trees in the vicinity of Poker. This happened in the twenty-sixth dynasty, when the amount of votive pottery deposited at Umm el-Qaab indicates that cultic activities were still going on there. As Leahy has observed, it is not inconceivable that trees and a pool were maintained at that site by artificial means, even though it lay a considerable distance away from the cultivated area.[353] The references to reaching the tomb of Osiris by water are harder to explain.

[346] More than 200 were excavated there by Garstang in 1906–7. See Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt*, pp. 1–8, especially p. 3.

[347] O'Connor, *Abydos*, p. 135.

[348] P. Harkness, 4/12. See M. Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)* (Oxford, 2005), plate 6.

[349] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 9/22–3. See F. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2 (London, 1905), plate 9.

[350] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 12/17 (Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plate 12).

[351] P. Berlin 8351, 3/15 and 5/9. See Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, plates 3–4.

[352] See B. Geßler-Löhr, *Die heiligen Seen ägyptischer Tempel: Ein Beitrag zur Deutung sakraler Baukunst im alten Ägypten* (Hildesheim, 1983), pp. 425–7.

[353] Leahy, *Göttinger Miszellen* 70 (1984), p. 50.

According to Leahy, these could be figurative and not to be taken literally.[354] Again, this is a possibility that cannot be ruled out.

But in a passage from P. Leiden T 32, dating to the first century AD, the deceased is told, 'You will stand erect on the deck of the *neshmet*-bark. You will circle around the shore of the Poker district.'[355] The second sentence indicates unambiguously that the district in question was on an island, which would seem to exclude a location at Umm el-Qaab. By contrast, this description fits the Osireion perfectly, since a prominent feature of that monument was a mound or raised construction surrounded by water on all sides.[356] Egyptian sources make it clear that Osiris had three 'major' tombs: one at Abydos, one at Busiris in the delta, and one at Bigga near Egypt's southern border. All shared certain common features. There were groves of sacred trees in their vicinity, and they were provided with 365 offering tables.[357] The tombs at Busiris and Bigga were both situated on islands,[358] so it is logical that the tomb at Abydos would be on an island as well, even if it was an artificial one.[359]

All this, combined with the archaeological evidence noted in sections 7.3.4–6, specifically the scarcity of votive pottery post-dating the twenty-sixth dynasty at the site of Umm el-Qaab and the re-use of the processional way leading there as a cemetery during the Roman Period, makes O'Connor's suggestion that the tomb of Osiris had been moved to the Osireion by this time a very plausible one in my view. As recorded by Strabo, in the first century BC this was connected to the Nile by a canal, which would explain the references in some sources to the fact that it was reached by boat.[360] Moreover, von Lieven has argued that the Osireion was conceptualized as a model of the underworld and thus may already have contained a shrine enclosing a bed with a life-size figure of Osiris lying on it.[361] If this is correct, then that edifice would have been an obvious place to relocate the tomb of Osiris from Umm el-Qaab.

Precisely when the god's tomb was relocated is difficult to determine. This may not have happened until the Roman Period, when the old processional way was blocked. But we should allow for the possibility that cultic activity at Umm el-Qaab diminished gradually over a period of time rather than stopping all at once. The focus of such

[354] Leahy, *JEA* 75 (1989), p. 58.

[355] P. Leiden T 32, 4/16. See F.-R. Herbin, *Le livre de parcourir l'éternité* (Leuven, 1994), p. 447 and plate 4.

[356] As already noted in Geßler-Löhr, *Die heiligen Seen ägyptischer Tempel*, p. 430.

[357] For the offering tables at Busiris and Bigga, see Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, pp. 222–4 and 226; Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, p. 64.

[358] For the tomb of Osiris on the island of Bigga, see section 7.2.2. For the corresponding island at Busiris, called *i.t-nbḥ* or *ỉlbḥ* in Egyptian and *Ἐλβώ* in Greek, see J. Quack, 'Quelques apports récents des études démotiques à la compréhension du livre II d'Hérodote', in L. Coulon, P. Giovannelli-Jouanna, and F. Kimmel-Clauzet (eds), *Hérodote et l'Égypte: Regards croisés sur le livre II de l'Enquête d'Hérodote* (Lyon, 2013), p. 80.

[359] So Geßler-Löhr, *Die heiligen Seen ägyptischer Tempel*, p. 430.

[360] H. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo* 8 (London and Cambridge, 1959), pp. 110–12 (17.I.42).

[361] A. von Lieven, 'Bemerkungen zum Dekorationsprogramm des Osireion in Abydos', in B. Haring and A. Klug (eds), *6. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Funktion und Gebrauch altägyptischer Tempelräume* (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 167–86, especially pp. 181–2.

activity may even have shifted to the temples close to the cultivation as early as the latter part of the Saite Period. In fact, it is not inconceivable that Peftjauawineith, acting on royal instructions, was the one responsible for relocating the tomb.[362] He does say that he provided the temple of Osiris with an Areq-heh made from a single block of granite. As we have seen, this is the name of the place where the god was interred. Likewise, the Areq-heh tomb of Osiris on the island of Bigga was located in his temple there. According to a text from the temple of Philae, when the doors of the house of Osiris were opened, one saw the god in Areq-heh.[363]

7.3.8. The latest evidence for belief in Osiris and the Osirian afterlife at Abydos

It is difficult to date the stelae that provide us with the latest evidence for belief in Osiris at Abydos. I think it is unlikely that any are later than the second century AD, if that late. Abdalla says that the stelae recovered from Abydos range from the end of the Ptolemaic Period or beginning of the Roman Period to at least the first half of the fourth century AD.[364] However, he produces no convincing dating criteria to support this statement. In fact, when discussing individual groups of stelae, there are none that he puts later than the Antonine Period.[365] Few of the stelae have precise dates. One records the completion of repairs to the portico of the temple of Abydos by the town scribe in year 17 of Tiberius (AD 31).[366] The latest precisely dated funerary stela was inscribed in year 7 of Vespasian (AD 75).[367] This neither mentions nor depicts Osiris, but since it shows the deceased on a lion bier attended by Anubis with mourning women at either end, we are probably justified in regarding it as testimony of the persistence of traditional Osirian beliefs about the next world.

The Greek graffiti in the temple of Seti I are also difficult to date. None that mention Osiris or Sarapis have precise dates. It is generally accepted that they were written between the second century BC and the early Roman Period.[368] Of the graffiti that mention Sarapis, Lanciers has suggested that one could date to *c.*186 BC.[369] The

[362] The continuing importance of the Osireion at this time is indicated by the fact that a copy of it was incorporated in the design of the contemporary tomb of Pediamenopet at Thebes (TT 33). See J. Elias, *Coffin Inscription in Egypt After the New Kingdom* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1993), pp. 208–10; C. Traunecker *apud* A. Gasse, F. Albert, S. Einaudi, I. Régen, and C. Traunecker, 'La Thèbes des morts: La dynamique thébaine dans les idées égyptiennes de l'au-delà', *ENiM* 8 (2015), pp. 62–6.

[363] Junker, *Das Götterdekret über das Abaton*, p. 85.

[364] Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt*, p. 127.

[365] Ibid., p. 128.

[366] S. Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes and Other Short Texts in the Demotic Script Found on Various Objects and Gathered from Many Publications* (Leuven, Paris, and Sterling, 2001), pp. 166–8. The stela was actually inscribed on 13 January 31 AD, so the repairs in question may have begun in the previous year.

[367] Stela Cairo 31138. See Abdalla, *Graeco-Roman Funerary Stelae from Upper Egypt*, p. 68; Spiegelberg, *CGC: Die demotischen Inschriften*, pp. 54–5 and plate 15.

[368] See Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), p. 86 note 406.

[369] PL 32. See E. Lanciers, 'Die ägyptischen Tempelbauten zur Zeit des Ptolemaios V. Epiphanes (204–180 v. Chr.)', *MDAIK* 43 (1987), p. 179 (reference courtesy of Ian Rutherford).

Trismegistos database proposes a date between 190 and 180 BC for another.[370] One graffito is dated to 7 December AD 48, but this does not mention any god. Nevertheless, it was written in the month of Khoiak, so could be the work of someone who had come to Abydos to participate in the mysteries of Osiris.[371] Another graffito is dated to 25 October AD 147. This only refers to 'the gods'.[372] The writer of this was responsible for four other Greek graffiti in the temple, three of which have precise dates. One, immediately below the graffito just mentioned, was written the day after it, on 26 October AD 147. It mentions 'the gods' as well.[373] The other two are dated in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, one in year 5 (AD 164–5),[374] and the other in year 20 (179–80).[375] Neither makes reference to any deities, but the former was written in the month of Khoiak.

So solid evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife at Abydos ceases in the middle of the second century AD, if not before. It might seem odd that this should happen at such a relatively early date, given the importance of Abydos as a cult centre of Osiris. At Akhmim we have evidence for belief in Osiris until the late third century AD, at Philae the evidence continues into the middle of the fifth century. But we should remember that the city of Abydos had been important for religious reasons long before Osiris made his first appearance there. In the grand scheme of things, that god was a latecomer to Abydos, so there is no reason why he should not have made an early departure from the scene there as well.

7.3.9. Osiris supplanted by Bes and his oracle

A particularly interesting development is that Osiris, and after him Sarapis, were eventually supplanted by Bes as the most important divinity at Abydos.[376] The popularity of Bes is abundantly attested by later Greek graffiti from the temple of Seti I there. These are mainly found on the exterior walls of the southern extension at the rear of that structure.[377] Bes was especially venerated as an oracular god, in which capacity he became internationally famous.[378] His oracle in the temple of Seti I at Abydos was closed down in AD 359 by order of the emperor Constantius II.[379] As far as we can judge, however, the cult of Osiris at Abydos had come to an end long before this occurred.

[370] PL 583 (reference courtesy of Ian Rutherford). [371] PL 2.
[372] PL 630. [373] PL 631. [374] PL 253. [375] PL 222.
[376] Rutherford in Matthews and Roemer (eds), *Ancient Perspectives on Egypt*, p. 180.
[377] Ibid., pp. 184–5 with figure 10:9.
[378] I. Bortolani, 'Bes e l'ἀκέφαλος θεός dei PGM', *EVO* 31 (2008), pp. 109–11.
[379] See A. Piankoff, 'The Osireion of Seti I at Abydos during the Greco-Roman Period and the Christian Occupation', *BSAC* 15 (1958–60), pp. 127–8.

7.3.10. Reminiscences of Osiris and his tomb at Abydos in texts of later date from other parts of Egypt

It is interesting to note that some texts post-dating the second century AD, while not from Abydos, do make reference to Osiris in connection with that city. Although such texts do not prove that the god's cult persisted there until the time when they were written, they do show that some historical awareness of it still remained. For example, the demotic text on a bilingual mummy label from the necropolis of Triphion dated to 24 February AD 268 includes the formula 'May her *ba* live in the presence of Osiris-Sokar, the great god and lord of Abydos.'[380] The city is also mentioned in a demotic graffito from Philae, the writer of which identifies himself as a priest of Osiris lord of Abydos.[381] Unfortunately, this graffito is undated.

Magical texts written in demotic and Old Coptic sometimes refer to Osiris in an Abydene context. A good example is a vessel enquiry addressed to that god in the demotic London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, which invokes him as 'Osiris the king of the underworld and lord of mummification, whose head is in This and whose feet are in Thebes, who gives answer in Abydos'.[382] This manuscript dates to the late second or early third century AD and comes from Thebes.[383] A number of its other spells refer to Osiris in connection with Abydos as well.[384] Two have already been cited in section 7.3.7. In general, these reveal a good knowledge of matters pertaining to the god's burial place and cult there. The particular spell just cited is especially interesting, not only because it shows that Osiris could be consulted for purposes of divination, but because it implies that he was regarded as a giver of oracles in Abydos too.[385] Perhaps when Bes replaced Osiris as the chief god there, he took over this oracular function from him as well.

An Old Coptic spell in PGM IV, which dates to the third or the fourth century AD and comes from the Theban region, invokes Osiris in terms very similar to the demotic spell cited in the preceding paragraph, calling him 'Osiris king of the underworld, who is to the south of This, who gives answer at Abydos'.[386] Another spell in the same manuscript invokes an unidentified being with the words 'Rise up before the doors

[380] Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 476–7, no. 846.

[381] Ph. 428.

[382] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 21/2. See Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plate 21.

[383] See J. Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites: The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100–300 CE)* (Leiden and Boston, 2005), pp. 40–4.

[384] For the relevant passages, see F. Griffith and H. Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 3 (London, 1909), p. 22, no. 223.

[385] For Osiris as an oracular god, see Leitz, *Geographisch-osirianische Prozessionen aus Philae, Dendara und Athribis*, p. 98, citing a text from Philae where Osiris is called *sr ỉỉ r ḥnty*, 'he who foretells what is to come in the future'. Ibid., p. 106, he interprets this as a reference to divination by the moon. For oracles addressed to Osiris-Apis, see section 6.12.2.

[386] PGM IV, lines 11–12. See K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* 1 (Stuttgart, 1973), p. 66.

(ⲛⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ) of Alkhahah, speak the truth in Oupoke.'[387] This has been interpreted as a further reference to the oracular activity of Osiris at Abydos, but such an interpretation is impossible for two reasons. First, the words just quoted are not addressed to that god but to someone else. This is clear because the recitant goes on to refer to Osiris in the third person, thus distinguishing him from the being to whom he has addressed the imperatives 'rise up' and 'speak the truth'.[388] Second, the injunction 'speak the truth' would hardly be addressed to a genuine cult oracle of Osiris, since this would impugn its veracity, implying that it might utter falsehood. Compare the Greek graffiti from the temple of Seti I at Abydos, which take it for granted that the oracle of Bes is invariably truthful.[389]

The words 'the doors of Alkhahah' in the sentence just quoted are often wrongly translated as 'the kings of Alkhahah'.[390] This error is based on the misconception that Alkhahah (< earlier Egyptian *ʿrq-ḥḥ*, 'Areq-heh') is synonymous with Oupoke (< earlier *W-pqr*, 'the district of Poker'). Since at some periods of Egyptian history, the Poker district was located at Umm el-Qaab, it is assumed that the kings of Alkhahah are the early dynastic rulers whose tombs were situated there.[391] But as we have seen, Areq-heh is not synonymous with Poker. Rather it denotes the tomb of Osiris that lay within that sacred district. The relationship between the two is made clear in a passage in P. Berlin 8351 where the deceased is told 'Water will be poured out for you at these 365 offering tables which are beneath the great trees of the Poker district. You will be addressed at these 365 offering tables which are on the way to Areq-heh.'[392] Both sentences in this passage make reference to the same group of offering tables. The first locates them beneath the trees of Poker, the second on the way to Areq-heh. Thus the way to the latter passes through the former. Areq-heh is not co-extensive with, but only a small part of, the larger Poker district. It corresponds to what the twelfth dynasty stela of Ikhernofret calls Osiris's *mʿḥʿ.t ḫnt.t Pqr*, 'tomb which is in Poker'.[393] Consequently there are no kings of Areq-heh. Only one king is buried there, and that is Osiris.

[387] PGM IV, line 123. See Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 72.

[388] Cf. PGM IV, lines 126–8, where the recitant says 'I am Anubis who lifts up the glorious crown of Pre and places it on Pharaoh Osiris' (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 74).

[389] See e.g. PL 489, 492, 493, 500, 503, and 528; Perdrizet and Lefebvre, *Les graffites grecs du Memnonion d'Abydos*, p. xix; Bortolani, *EVO* 31 (2008), p. 110. Magicians, by contrast, tend to exhibit less confidence in the veracity of the informants that they consult. A request for a dream oracle from Bes in PGM VII, for instance, adjures the god to come and provide the information sought 'without deceit and without treachery'. See K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* 2 (Stuttgart, 1973), p. 11 (PGM VII, lines 247–8).

[390] See e.g. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 75; H. Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago, 1992), p. 39; H. Satzinger, 'An Old Coptic Text Reconsidered: PGM 94ff.', in S. Giversen, M. Krause, and P. Nagel (eds), *Coptology: Past, Present, and Future. Studies in Honor of Rodolphe Kasser* (Leuven, 1994), p. 215; Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), p. 86; M. Meyer and R. Smith (eds), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco, 1994), pp. 24–5.

[391] See Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, p. 39 note 37; Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), p. 86 note 414.

[392] P. Berlin 8351, 5/9–10. See Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, plate 4.

[393] K. Sethe, *Ägyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht* (Hildesheim, 1959), p. 71, line 16.

As it is a built structure, one expects the tomb of Osiris to have doors and walls, and in fact a passage in P. Harkness instructs the deceased to go to the door of Areq-heh on the night of the festival of Sokar.[394] Areq-heh itself is described as 'the western door' elsewhere in the same text.[395] A passage in P. Berlin 3044 states that the deceased will pass through the walls of Areq-heh.[396] As we have seen in section 7.3.7, a text in the temple of Philae says that when the doors of the house of Osiris on the island of Bigga are opened, one sees the god in Areq-heh.[397] Thus the fact that Areq-heh had doors can be confirmed by the evidence of other sources. By contrast, no Egyptian text ever refers to kings in connection with it.

7.3.11. Supposed evidence for the persistence of cultic activity at Umm el-Qaab into the Christian Period

7.3.11.1. The falcons who chatter and watch before the head of Osiris

A Greek magical text, PGM VIII, preserves a request for a dream oracle from the god Bes. This manuscript dates to the fourth or fifth century AD. According to the Trismegistos website, its provenience is unknown. At one point in the spell, the recitant addresses Bes with the words 'You are not a demon, but the blood of the two falcons who chatter and watch before the head of Osiris.'[398] A variant of this spell in PGM VII, which dates to the third century AD, substitutes 'the twelve falcons who chatter and watch before the head of heaven'.[399] Another variant in PGM CII (fourth century) has 'of the thirty and of the one hundred and four falcons who are also chattering and watching before the head of Osiris'.[400] These magical texts show some confusion about the number of falcons involved and also the identity of the one before whose head they chatter and watch, but nevertheless they are of considerable interest.

Effland, Budka, and Effland have singled out the spell in PGM VIII which refers to a pair of falcons chattering and watching before the head of Osiris for special attention. Since the spell addresses Bes in an oracular context, they associate it with Abydos. They compare the description of the falcons in this spell with the Osiris bed found in the tomb of Djer at Umm el-Qaab, on which there is a falcon on either side of that god's head. They argue that the spell actually refers to the bed. According to them this shows

[394] P. Harkness, 4/23. See Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, plate 6.

[395] P. Harkness, 5/10. See Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 223 and plate 7.

[396] P. Berlin 3044, lines 21–2. See Herbin, *Le livre de parcourir l'éternité*, pp. 415 and 417. The parallels substitute 'the doors of "Uplifter of millions" '.

[397] Junker, *Das Götterdekret über das Abaton*, p. 85. Cf. section 7.3.7.

[398] PGM VIII, lines 99–101. See Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 2, p. 50.

[399] PGM VII, lines 239–41. See Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 2, p. 11. The version of the text that he gives has 'two falcons', but the reading of the original manuscript is 'twelve' (ιβ). See Bortolani, *EVO* 31 (2008), p. 107 note 11.

[400] P. Oxyrhynchus 2753, fragment D, lines 14–16. See R. Coles, D. Foraboschi, A. El-Mosallamy, J. Rea, and U. Schlag (eds), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 36 (London, 1970), p. 27.

that, at the time when the spell was written (fourth or fifth century AD), the Osiris bed in the tomb of Djer must still have been known to worshippers, and that therefore the oracle at Abydos continued to function, only now at Umm el-Qaab as well as in the temple of Seti I.[401] In support of their argument, they cite the second of the two passages from PGM IV discussed in section 7.3.10, which they translate 'Erhebe dich hin zu den Königen von Alchah, die sagen Wahrheit in Upoqe.'[402] They identify the god who was consulted for oracular purposes there as (Osiris)-Helios-Bes.[403]

In my opinion, this view is untenable for four reasons. First as we have seen, the magical spells that refer to the falcons disagree with one another both as to the number of birds involved and the identity of the one whom they are supposed to protect, which suggests that the tradition concerning them which the spells record was garbled and no longer current. If these utterances refer to something that could actually be seen at Abydos at the time when they were written, why is there so much discrepancy among them? Second, as shown in section 7.3.10, the passage from PGM IV adduced by Effland, Budka, and Effland as evidence for their view that oracular activity involving Osiris still continued at Abydos at the time when it was composed actually makes no reference to such activity. Not only do they mistranslate 'the doors' in that passage as 'the kings', they also mistranslate the imperative 'speak' as a relative clause 'who speak', although no relative converter is present.

Third, although there are certainly connections between Osiris and Bes in the Roman Period and earlier, there is no evidence for any type of syncretism between the two gods at Abydos or in any of the magical spells that Effland, Budka, and Effland associate with the Osiris bed there. In those spells, on the contrary, Bes and Osiris are clearly distinguished.[404] The former is identified as the blood of the falcons who keep watch over the latter, and this is in fact the normal role of Bes in relation to Osiris, that of protector.[405] The spells in PGM VII, VIII, and CII invoke Bes as 'the headless god' (ὁ ἀκέφαλος θεός). Osiris is likewise called 'the headless one' (ὁ ἀκέφαλος) in a spell in PGM V,[406] but this does not constitute evidence of their identification, since that spell does not mention Bes at all, and a headless form is attested for other deities as well.[407] Thus there are no grounds for assuming the existence of a syncretism involving Osiris and Bes at Abydos.

Fourth and finally, even if one were to accept the argument that the reference to the two falcons chattering and watching before the head of Osiris in PGM VIII relates to a

[401] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), p. 87. [402] Ibid., p. 86.
[403] Ibid., p. 86. [404] Bortolani, *EVO* 31 (2008), p. 114.
[405] See e.g. J. Berlandini, 'L'"acéphale" et le ritual de revirilisation', *OMRO* 73 (1993), pp. 29 and 33; Bortolani, *EVO* 31 (2008), p. 122. For the protective role of Bes more generally, see ibid., pp. 114–18; J. Berlandini, 'Bès en aurige dans le char du dieu-sauveur', in W. Clarysse, A. Schoors, and H. Willems (eds), *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years* 1 (Leuven, 1998), pp. 31–55; Y. Volokhine, 'Quelques aspects de Bès dans les temples égyptiens de l'époque gréco-romaine', in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Isis on the Nile*, pp. 233–55.
[406] PGM V, line 98. See Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 184.
[407] See Berlandini, *OMRO* 73 (1993), pp. 30–2; Bortolani, *EVO* 31 (2008), pp. 122–4.

concrete object or representation that the composer of the spell may actually have seen, why should this be the Osiris bed, which was buried at a site which, as far as we can judge, was no longer visited or used for cultic purposes? There is no evidence that it was accessible or even known to people at the time when the spell was composed. A much better candidate, in my opinion, would be the relief depicting Osiris on a lion bed protected by falcons on the south wall of the chamber of Ptah-Sokar in the temple of Seti I itself, since we know that this was accessible to visitors because of the graffiti that they left in the chambers adjacent to it.[408] The relief in question is effectively a two-dimensional counterpart of the Osiris bed. So close is their resemblance to each other that when the discoverer of the bed, Amélineau, first saw it, he thought it was either the model on which the relief was based or a copy made directly from the relief.[409]

A further point to note is that the motif of two falcons acting as protectors of the dead god is very prominent in another scene on the north wall of the same chamber, which shows Isis and Horus as falcons standing side by side.[410] Isis and Horus are named as the protectors on the Osiris bed and in the relief on the south wall of the chamber of Ptah-Sokar as well. There are actually five falcons depicted on the former: two at the head of the recumbent Osiris, two at his feet, and another covering his phallus. However, the first four are all labelled 'Horus protector of his father', so they effectively count as one. This, together with the fifth falcon, which is labelled 'Isis', makes a total of two birds.[411] The fact that Isis and Horus as protective falcons figure not once but twice in the chamber of Ptah-Sokar is another reason why the relief decoration of this room is a much more plausible source of inspiration for the image of the pair of falcons chattering and watching before the head of Osiris in PGM VIII than the Osiris bed found at the deserted site of Umm el-Qaab.

We should also bear in mind that reliefs depicting falcons protecting a recumbent figure of Osiris on a lion bed are by no means unique to the monuments of Abydos. Scenes very similar to the one depicted on the south wall of the Ptah-Sokar chamber in the temple of Seti I are found in other temples as well. A good example occurs on the northwest wall of the third eastern Osiris chapel on the roof of the temple of Hathor at Dendera.[412] Here too the deities guarding the recumbent Osiris are identified as Isis and Horus protector of his father. It is of particular interest that all three have epithets that relate them specifically to Abydos. Both Osiris and Horus are called 'great god and lord of Abydos', while Isis is called 'protector of her brother in the city of the scarab'.[413]

[408] For illustrations of this relief, see E. Otto, *Osiris und Amun: Kult und heilige Stätten* (Munich, 1966), plate 17; F. Tonic, *Les temples d'Abydos: Le chef d'oeuvre pharaonique* (no place of publication given, 2010), pp. 94–5.

[409] Amélineau, *Le tombeau d'Osiris*, p. 110.

[410] See K. Eaton, 'The Festivals of Osiris and Sokar in the Month of Khoiak: The Evidence from Nineteenth Dynasty Royal Monuments at Abydos', *SAK* 35 (2006), p. 82 and plate 5 (upper).

[411] See Leahy, *Orientalia* 46 (1977), p. 425; Otto, *Osiris und Amun*, plates 18–19; Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), p. 89, Abb. 55.

[412] Cauville, *Dendara* 10, pp. 231–2 with plates 106 and 135.

[413] For 'city of the scarab' as an alternative name for Abydos, see Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 221.

As this example shows, even if the description of the two falcons in PGM VIII relates to something that the composer of the relevant spell actually saw, he need not have seen it at Abydos. Accordingly, neither this nor the other Greek magical papyri cited in section 7.3.11.1 provide compelling evidence for the persistence of any form of cultic activity, oracular or otherwise, involving Osiris at Umm el-Qaab at the time when they were written.

7.3.11.2. The 'mountain' of Abydos and its location

Effland, Budka, and Effland cite other evidence in support of their theory that traditional cultic activity continued at Umm el-Qaab into the Christian Period. They refer to two passages in the Coptic Life of Apa Moses where reference is made to a temple of the god Apollo located somewhere in the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ or 'mountain' of Abydos, which they think must be Umm el-Qaab.[414] Moses was a monk who lived in the fifth and sixth centuries AD and founded a monastery at Abydos.[415] His biography is preserved in two Coptic codices dating to the tenth or the eleventh century.[416] We will look at this text in more detail in section 7.3.12. Here I will only observe that Coptic sources show clearly that the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ of Abydos is not Umm el-Qaab as Effland, Budka, and Effland suppose.

The monastery founded by Moses stood to the southeast of the temple of Seti I. This is evident from a passage in his biography where that temple is said to be situated to the north of his monastery.[417] At Abydos, the Nile River flows southeast to northwest. Thus local north is actually northwest and local south southeast.[418] A look at a map will suffice to show that this is nowhere near Umm el-Qaab. Nevertheless, another Coptic source, the panegyric on Claudius of Antioch attributed to Severus of Antioch, states unequivocally that the monastery of Apa Moses was located in the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ of Abydos.[419] One passage in the Life of Moses describes how a band of 40 armed pagans searched through the entire ⲧⲟⲟⲩ of Abydos looking for Moses and his brothers in order to kill them.[420] This shows that the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ must have been an area of considerable extent, much larger than Umm el-Qaab. In more than one passage of the Life, the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ is contrasted with the ϣⲱϫⲉ, cultivated or arable land. The ⲧⲟⲟⲩ and the ϣⲱϫⲉ are

[414] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), p. 90. ⲧⲟⲟⲩ is printed there incorrectly as ⲧⲟⲟϫ.

[415] For bibliography on Moses, see S. Uljas, 'The IFAO Leaves of the *Life* of Moses of Abydos', *Orientalia* 80 (2011), p. 374 note 10, and literature cited there; Dijkstra, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 7 (2015), p. 69.

[416] See Uljas, *Orientalia* 80 (2011), pp. 373–4.

[417] W. Till, *Koptische Heiligen- und Martyrerlegenden* 2 (Rome, 1936), p. 52, lines 24–5. Cf. P. Grossmann, 'Zu Moses von Abydos und die Bischöfe seiner Zeit', *BSAC* 38 (1999), p. 51. For what may have been archaeological remains of the monastery, now no longer extant, see ibid., p. 64; R.-G. Coquin, 'Moïse d'Abydos', in J.-M. Rosenstiehl (ed.), *Deuxième journée d'études coptes, Strasbourg 25 Mai 1984* (Louvain, 1986), p. 9.

[418] See section 2.3.3.2.

[419] G. Godron, *Textes coptes relatifs à Saint Claude d'Antioche* (Turnhout, 1970), p. 498, lines 29–30.

[420] É. Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IVe, V^e^, VIe et VIIe siècles* (Paris, 1895), p. 685.

said to border each other.[421] Thus the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ is a large area that borders the cultivation. All this shows clearly, in my opinion, that the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ of Abydos is the arid land, the low desert, that lies between the cultivation to the east and the high desert to the west.[422] The latter is called the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲣⲁⲓϩⲟⲩⲛ, 'inner ⲧⲟⲟⲩ', to distinguish it from the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ proper.[423] The ⲧⲟⲟⲩ itself includes Umm el-Qaab, but that site is only a small part of it. Therefore a reference in a Coptic text to a temple in the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ of Abydos cannot be used as evidence for the continuation of cultic activities there, as Effland, Budka, and Effland think.

7.3.11.3. Representations of Bes from Umm el-Qaab?

In addition to the Osiris bed, fragments of a limestone shrine were discovered in the tomb of Djer as well.[424] This had been broken up and some of its constituent pieces used to build a wall. It has been estimated that the extant fragments constitute 40 to 50 per cent of the original monument. Dreyer thinks the shrine may have contained a statue of Osiris,[425] but Effland, Budka, and Effland argue that it enclosed the Osiris bed.[426] One fragment of the shrine preserves part of a crude drawing of a human face, which they identify as Bes.[427] They interpret this as evidence that the shrine remained intact and was still visited to consult the god's oracle until the middle of the fifth century AD, at which point it was demolished by followers of Shenoute.[428]

I see three problems with this interpretation. The first is that the face does not actually look like Bes. None of the characteristic features of that god can be distinguished. The figure depicted has a round head with large staring eyes. It appears to be bald. There is no beard. Nor is there any trace of the modius, the usual headdress worn by Bes. Thus there are no grounds for identifying the drawing as a representation of him. The second problem is that we have no means of determining when the shrine was destroyed, so how can we be certain that this happened as late as Effland, Budka, and Effland say it did?

The third problem is that we do not know who was responsible for the shrine's destruction or what their motive was. Some of the extant fragments of it preserve remnants of the figure of a king presenting an offering to a god. Both the king's figure and the cartouche containing his name have been effaced, with the exception of the sun disk at the beginning of the latter.[429] Conversely, the figure of the god was left

[421] Ibid., p. 682; Uljas, *Orientalia* 80 (2011), pp. 381–2 and 389.
[422] For this meaning of ⲧⲟⲟⲩ and its ancestor *ḏw*, see Leitz, *Geographisch-osirianische Prozessionen aus Philae, Dendara und Athribis*, pp. 132–3.
[423] See Uljas, *Orientalia* 80 (2011), pp. 397 and 413.
[424] Effland, *Sokar* 16 (2008), pp. 14–15; Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 20 and 30–5.
[425] G. Dreyer, 'Nebengräber ohne Ende: Der Grabkomplex des Djer in Abydos', *Sokar* 24 (2012), p. 11.
[426] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 33–5.
[427] Ibid., pp. 87–8 with Abb. 53. [428] Ibid., p. 90.
[429] See G. Dreyer, 'Report on the 20th Campaign of Reexamining the Royal Tombs of Umm el-Qaab at Abydos 2005/2006', *ASAE* 82 (2008), p. 56, plate 5b.

undamaged, as were the divine names in the royal epithets 'son of Re' and 'beloved of Wepwaut'.[430] Inscriptions on other fragments of the shrine mention Isis, Horus, and Osiris. Their names are intact as well.[431] Precisely the same pattern of destruction is apparent in the inscriptions on the Osiris bed. Royal names, apart from elements like the sun disk, were targeted, but those of divinities were left alone.[432] This shows that the damage inflicted on the texts of the shrine and the bed was not perpetrated by Christian monks, but rather by vandals who were capable of reading hieroglyphs. Thus they were the objects of at least one attack prior to the rise of Christianity. The more extensive damage that the shrine and the bed suffered subsequently could have been inflicted by the Persians, who are known to have vandalized monuments at Abydos during their conquest of Egypt.[433] The idea that they remained intact until the fifth century AD is pure speculation. Even if they did, this does not prove that they were still the focus of cultural activity at that time. They could have fallen out of use or been abandoned long before.

Finally, a potsherd incised with another crude drawing of a human face was discovered in a spoil heap near the tomb of Djer. This appears to depict a person sticking his tongue out. Effland, Budka, and Effland claim that this is Bes as well, based upon the fact that he is regularly shown with his tongue protruding, and cite this as further evidence for the persistence of the god's cult at Umm el-Qaab.[434] I see four problems here. The first is that we have no way of dating the ostracon, so how can we be certain that it is as late as they think? The second is that, apart from the protruding tongue, the face inscribed on the ostracon has nothing in common with that of Bes. The third is that Effland, Budka, and Effland overlook the prevalence of the gesture of sticking out one's tongue in Egyptian culture. This is mentioned in a number of texts, some of them pre-dating the earliest references to Bes himself.[435] It is both a sign of aggression or insult, and a gesture to ward off threats, employed by gods as well as human beings.[436] How then can we identify any specific example of a figure with protruding tongue as that of Bes, especially when the rest of that god's traditional iconography is totally lacking? The fourth problem is that the ostracon is a portable object found in a spoil heap at a very disturbed site, and we have no way of knowing how or why it came to be in the place where it was found.[437] Another ostracon inscribed with the words 'Apa Moses' was discovered in the tomb of Den not far

[430] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 31–2.

[431] Ibid., p. 33 note 73; É. Amélineau, *Les nouvelles fouilles d'Abydos 1897–1898* (Paris, 1904), pp. 159, 201 (no. 11), and 202 (no. 1).

[432] Leahy, *Orientalia* 46 (1977), pp. 427–9.

[433] See section 7.3.4.

[434] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), p. 88 with Abb. 54.

[435] Volokhine in Bricault and Versluys (eds), *Isis on the Nile*, pp. 234–5.

[436] See D. Meeks, *Mythes et légendes du Delta d'après le papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.84* (Cairo, 2006), pp. 36, 155, and 306–7; D. Kurth, 'Zunge', in W. Helck and W. Westendorf (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 6 (Wiesbaden, 1986), p. 1425.

[437] As an indication of how disturbed the site was, one may note the fact that one fragment of the Osiris bed buried in the tomb of Djer was discovered by the adjacent tomb of Anedjib while another was found no less than 200 metres to the south of it. See O'Connor, *Abydos*, pp. 133–4.

away from that of Djer.[438] This hardly constitutes evidence that a church or shrine dedicated to that monk stood there. For much the same reason, the ostracon with a picture of a face with protruding tongue cannot be used to argue for the existence of a cult of Bes at Umm el-Qaab at the time when it was inscribed.

As we see from the examples discussed above, Effland, Budka, and Effland have a tendency to identify every depiction of a grotesque face at Abydos as a representation of Bes. However, I think we should be cautious about identifying such images in this way, in the absence of supporting evidence like a label or an iconographic feature specific to that god. Otherwise, there is a danger that our interpretation of a given image will be influenced by our preconceptions. Amélineau discovered a fragment of a cylindrical vessel in the tomb of Djer, on which there was drawn a picture of a face with a beard and large staring eyes.[439] Since he was interested in documenting the presence of Christians at the tomb, he identified this as a representation of Christ.[440] Not surprisingly, Effland, Budka, and Effland prefer to identify it as Bes.[441] A graffito in the Osireion of Seti I depicts a grotesque face with long hair, large staring eyes, and protruding teeth.[442] Judged by some standards, its appearance is sufficiently bizarre to merit identification as an image of Bes. At any rate, it looks no less like him than the other representations discussed in this section. In this case, however, a short text above the face identifies it as 'Michael', demonstrating that not every strange-looking face depicted at Abydos is that of Bes. Accordingly, one cannot identify a particular image as him simply because it looks grotesque.

7.3.12. The end of traditional Egyptian religion at Abydos: evaluating the Coptic Life of Moses

To summarize, there is no convincing evidence, textual or archaeological, for the continuation of traditional Egyptian cultic activity at the site of Umm el-Qaab as late as Effland, Budka, and Effland have maintained. A separate question is when traditional Egyptian religion came to an end in the region of Abydos as a whole. As we have seen, this persisted for some time after the disappearance of Osiris there. One graffito from the temple of Seti I that mentions Bes is accompanied by the writer's horoscope, which shows that he was born on 21 or 22 September AD 353.[443] This was probably inscribed after the oracle had been closed down by imperial order in 359. Otherwise, the writer would have been 6 years old or less at the time when he inscribed the graffito. This demonstrates once again the inability of royal power to control every aspect of cultic activity.[444]

[438] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), pp. 90–1 with Abb. 56.
[439] Amélineau, *Le tombeau d'Osiris*, plate 4, no. 16. [440] Ibid., p. 79.
[441] Effland, Budka, and Effland, *MDAIK* 66 (2010), p. 87.
[442] Piankoff, *BSAC* 15 (1958–60), p. 147, figure 14.
[443] I. Rutherford, 'The Reader's Voice in a Horoscope from Abydos (Perdrizet and Lefebvre, no. 641)', *ZPE* 130 (2000), pp. 149–50.
[444] It is unlikely that the graffito was written in the reign of Julian the Apostate (AD 361–3), when the strictures against the cult of Bes would have been relaxed, since even then the writer would have been only 10 years old at the most.

The horoscope graffito in the temple of Seti I is the latest unambiguous evidence we have for the practice of traditional Egyptian religion at Abydos. Nevertheless, some have claimed that it persisted there until the sixth century AD. This claim is based on two passages from the Coptic Life of Moses, to which reference has already been made in section 7.3.11.2. According to this text, the birth of Moses was predicted by Shenoute on his deathbed.[445] If this is true, then he must have been born sometime after that monk's death in 465. We do not know when he died. The panegyric on Claudius of Antioch attributed to Severus of Antioch says that the latter visited Moses at his monastery.[446] We know from other sources that Severus was exiled to Egypt in September 518 and died in February 538. According to the panegyric, Theodosius the patriarch of Alexandria was staying at the monastery at the same time as he was. Theodosius held office from 535 until 538, so the visit of Severus must have taken place between those years. Thus Moses survived until at least 538.[447]

The first passage in the Life of Moses that concerns us relates how people from two villages came and complained to the monk about the activities of an evil demon called Bes who had taken up residence in the temple north of his monastery, in other words, that of Seti I.[448] The demon would strike those who passed by, blinding some in one eye, causing their hands to shrivel, afflicting some with lameness, causing faces to swell up, and making his victims deaf and dumb. He would leap down from the temple, changing himself into various forms. The text informs us that God had permitted this so that he could display his miraculous power. In response, Moses went to the temple with seven other brothers at night. The end of the story is not preserved, but it is clear that, although the demon tries to frighten the monks away, they succeed in exorcising him.

This passage is of interest because it reflects the historical association of Bes with the temple of Seti I. It is not surprising that knowledge of this association survived, since the name of the god would still have been legible in numerous Greek graffiti on the outer walls of that monument. But in no way does the passage suggest that people were worshipping Bes or seeking oracular advice from him. Rather, he is regarded as a pest, whom the monks are called in to eradicate. Thus it does not provide evidence of a continuing cult. Also noteworthy is the fact that the passage makes no reference at all to Umm el-Qaab. This shows that, however much some modern commentators would like to banish Bes to that remote site, he himself preferred the cosier surroundings of Seti I's temple.

The second passage in the Life of Moses is slightly different. It relates how some temples at Abydos were destroyed.[449] Moses and some other brothers went to a hill overlooking the temple of Apollo. They prayed there for several hours. Then an angel

[445] Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IVe, V^e^, VIe et VIIe siècles*, p. 682.
[446] Godron, *Textes coptes relatifs à Saint Claude d'Antioche*, pp. 498, line 29–500, line 19.
[447] Coquin in J.-M. Rosenstiehl (ed.), *Deuxième journée d'études coptes, Strasbourg 25 Mai 1984*, p. 6.
[448] Till, *Koptische Heiligen- und Martyrerlegenden* 2, pp. 52, line 21–54, line 15.
[449] Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IVe, V^e^, VIe et VIIe siècles*, pp. 685–7; Till, *Koptische Heiligen- und Martyrerlegenden* 2, pp. 49, line 12–50, line 3.

appeared and said to Moses 'Take courage, Moses, and keep praying for the destruction of the temple of Apollo, for the lord has heard you and he will take vengeance upon all the temples of Abydos and their priests.' Moses prayed again, invoking various Old Testament precedents in which God destroyed pagan temples and killed their priests through the agency of figures like Daniel and Elijah, asking him to do the same to the temple of Apollo. At that point the earth began to shake and the temple began to move. The pagans were afraid and opened the doors and fled. The only ones who remained inside were the priests, who were confident that their god would not let any evil befall them. Then the temple of Apollo collapsed and twenty-three ⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ priests and seven ϩⲟⲛⲧ priests were killed. At dawn four other temples collapsed. The text concludes 'Up until today, no men have assembled at the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ of Abydos to offer further sacrifices, because those who misled them died, and the pagans and the sons of the priests finally became Christians.'

This account is problematic for several reasons. One problem is the presence of supernatural elements like the angel and the miraculous earthquake. Another is the fact that Moses is portrayed re-enacting or duplicating feats performed by Old Testament figures like Daniel and Elijah, who were also credited with the destruction of pagan sanctuaries and their priests. Furthermore, the description of the temple that he destroys is vague. It is said to be somewhere in the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ of Abydos. As we have seen, in the Life of Moses this means the arid land between the cultivation and the high desert, a very large area. Finally, the god venerated in the temple, Apollo, is Greek rather than Egyptian. The Egyptian deity who usually corresponds to Apollo is Horus. While there is some evidence for a cult of Horus at Abydos,[450] he was not one of the main deities venerated there. The only other references to a cult of Apollo in that city occur in classical writers like Strabo, who says that there was a grove of trees sacred to that god near the canal leading to the temple of Seti I and the Osireion.[451] All of these problematic features cast suspicion on the account's credibility.

However, one particular feature of the passage that relates the destruction of the temple of Apollo has been singled out by some commentators as proof that the events it describes really happened. This is the fact that it makes a distinction between two types of Egyptian priest: ⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ and ϩⲟⲛⲧ. It actually does so in only one instance. Elsewhere it refers to members of the Egyptian clergy indifferently as ⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ. Nevertheless, this has been interpreted as evidence that the writer of the passage had first-hand knowledge of the local cult and those who performed it.[452] But that interpretation is

[450] See, for instance, a demotic ostracon of Ptolemaic date from North Abydos (NAVZ no. 20) which mentions two individuals with the title *ḥm-ntr Ḥr*, 'god's servant of Horus', and a thirtieth dynasty statue belonging to a vizier Harsiese who was also god's servant of Osiris and Horus of the temple of the Poker district. For the former, see R. Jasnow and M. Pouls-Wegner, 'Demotic Ostraca from North Abydos', *Enchoria* 30 (2006/7), p. 36 and plates 16–17. For the latter, see Klotz, *BIFAO* 110 (2010), p. 136, and literature cited there.

[451] Jones, *The Geography of Strabo* 8, p. 112 (17.I.42). Cf. Piankoff, *BSAC* 15 (1958–60), pp. 125–6.

[452] See e.g. Kákosy in Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 18.5, pp. 2943–4; Frankfurter in Dijkstra and van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert*, p. 32.

questionable. As van Minnen has noted, the person who wrote the passage could have learned both of the priestly titles he uses from the Old Testament.[453] That he was familiar with this is evident from his allusions to figures like Daniel and Elijah.

Frankfurter has disputed van Minnen's interpretation, describing it as 'far-fetched', on the grounds that ϩⲟⲛⲧ appears only once in the Coptic Bible (Genesis 41:45).[454] The logic of this argument is difficult to follow. Why should the number of times something is mentioned in the Coptic Bible have a bearing upon whether or not it could have been known to Coptic writers? The tower of Babel is only mentioned once in that source (Genesis 11:1–9), yet the author of the Life of Moses makes a clear allusion to it in his narrative.[455] Moreover, Frankfurter's claim that ϩⲟⲛⲧ only occurs once in the Coptic Bible is demonstrably false, as anyone who makes the effort to look up the references to that noun in Crum's *Coptic Dictionary* can easily ascertain. Crum cites two examples of this priestly title from a pair of manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, nos. 43 and 44.[456] These are collections of extracts from various books of the Old Testament. Both incorporate the same group of extracts from the Book of Joshua, including one that mentions 'the ϩⲟⲛⲧ priests of the land', there clearly referring to non-Egyptian priests.[457] So the occurrence of ϩⲟⲛⲧ in the Book of Genesis is not unique in the Coptic Bible.

Does this mean that the distinction between two different types of Egyptian priest made by the author of the Life of Moses is without value in helping us to determine whether his account is trustworthy or not? In my opinion, it is of considerable value, but points to a very different conclusion than has usually been assumed up until now. Of the two sacerdotal titles mentioned in the Life of Moses, ⲟⲩⲛⲛⲃ is simply a generic term for priest, whether Christian or non-Christian.[458] Therefore, its use by the author of that work tells us nothing. By contrast, ϩⲟⲛⲧ is employed exclusively with reference to non-Christian priests, Egyptian or otherwise.[459] However, that noun derives from earlier Egyptian *ḥm-nṯr*, 'god's servant', which was rendered into Greek as προφήτης.[460] This title continues to appear in Greek papyri in the fourth century AD, but it is increasingly divorced from cultic contexts and used without any specific indication of cultic adherence.[461] By the time when Moses lived, it was used exclusively to denote

[453] See his comments in Dijkstra and van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert*, pp. 73–4.

[454] Frankfurter in Dijkstra and van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert*, p. 32 note 69.

[455] See Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IVe, Ve, VIe et VIIe siècles*, p. 686.

[456] W. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1939), p. 691b.

[457] P43, 97, and P44, 108. I am very grateful to Vincent Razanajao for providing me with scans of these manuscripts from the Crum papers in the Griffith Institute Archives.

[458] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, p. 488; A. Alcock, 'Coptic Words for "Priest"', *ZÄS* 114 (1987), p. 179 (reference courtesy of Edward Love).

[459] For another reference to a non-Egyptian ϩⲟⲛⲧ, in addition to those already cited, see F. Rossi, *Un nuovo codice copto del Museo Egizio di Torino* (Rome, 1893), p. 82, right hand column, line 6. There too a ϩⲟⲛⲧ of Apollo is involved.

[460] F. Daumas, *Les moyens d'expression du grec et de l'égyptien comparés dans les décrets de Canope et de Memphis* (Cairo, 1952), p. 181.

[461] Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri*, pp. 70–1 and 139.

Christian priests.[462] Thus the use of its Coptic equivalent ϩⲟⲛⲧ to describe a pagan priest in that monk's biography would have been a complete anachronism, meaningless in the context of Egyptian religious life during Moses's lifetime, and a clear indication that the passage in which it appeared was fictional.

Another clue pointing to the fictional character of the account of the destruction of the temple of Apollo in the Life of Moses is the ratio of ϩⲟⲛⲧ priests to ⲟⲩⲛⲏⲃ priests who are said to be attached to that sanctuary. There are seven of the former as opposed to twenty-three of the latter. As Joachim Quack has pointed out to me, one would not find such a high ratio of ϩⲟⲛⲧ priests to ⲟⲩⲛⲏⲃ priests in a real Egyptian temple. Furthermore, whoever wrote the story had no idea how an Egyptian temple functioned, since the lay worshippers are said to be inside it along with the priests. In reality, only the latter would have had access to the building. The writer has clearly confused the temple with a church, which was undoubtedly the only type of religious edifice with which he had any familiarity. So the description of the Egyptian temple and its priests in the passage from the Life of Moses that we have just analysed, far from proving that its author had an intimate knowledge of the local cult and its practitioners, actually demonstrates the opposite.

The credibility of this passage is further undermined by another Coptic source, the panegyric on Claudius of Antioch, to which reference has been made earlier in this section. The narrator of this text, Severus, makes it clear that when he visited Moses at his monastery in the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ of Abydos, not only had traditional Egyptian cultic activities already ceased there, the temples were still standing intact and were of such a size as to fill him with wonder.[463] They would hardly have had this effect upon him had they been in ruins. Thus the account of Severus directly contradicts the Life of Moses, according to which the end of pagan worship at Abydos was accompanied by the destruction of temples. This is a further reason, if one were needed, for rejecting the latter as a trustworthy source of evidence for the demise of pagan cults in that city.

7.3.13. The end of traditional Egyptian religion at Abydos: written evidence and material context

Abydos is a very large site. It is also a very complex site, since it has a wide range of archaeological remains, both religious and secular, and royal and non-royal, including cemeteries, temples dedicated to both gods and kings, and other structures like the enigmatic cultic enclosures. These date from virtually every period of Egyptian history, from predynastic to Coptic. Furthermore, there is clear evidence that some of these remains were re-used, sometimes for quite different purposes, by Egyptians of later periods. To cite only two examples, the tomb of the first dynasty ruler Djer came to be

[462] Ibid., p. 136.
[463] See Godron, *Textes coptes relatifs à Saint Claude d'Antioche*, p. 498, lines 29–31.

regarded as the tomb of Osiris, while the temple of Seti I was transformed into a venue for the consultation of oracles.

Written evidence comes from not one, but many different parts of the site, and dates to many different periods. Thus we have to evaluate such evidence carefully to gain the maximum amount of information from it. In this endeavour, it is not only the contents of a text that are important, but its material context as well, its location in space. Is the text inscribed on the walls of a building or other fixed structure, or on a portable object like a stela or ostracon? If the former, where is the building located? In which part of the building is the text inscribed? If a text is written on a portable object, we must ask not only where the object was found, but whether it was discovered in the course of a controlled excavation or is just a random surface find. What evidence do we have for the removal of such objects from one part of the site to another? Did an object come to be in the place where it was found as the result of an accident or chance, or was it deposited there deliberately? This approach allows us to use written evidence, in conjunction with other types, to determine which parts of the site were exploited most intensively and which parts were ignored at any given time.

The graffiti in the temple of Seti I and the Osireion at Abydos, for example, tell us not only how those sacred spaces were reconceptualized in Ptolemaic and Roman times, but which specific parts of them figured most prominently in that reconceptualization. We need to analyse these graffiti, not simply as written sources, but as artefacts inscribed on particular surfaces, in particular rooms, at particular heights, and in relation to other artefacts in the same location. Likewise, the funerary stelae of the Roman Period found at Abydos show not only that belief in the relationship between Osiris and the deceased in the afterlife continued up until the first or second century AD; by virtue of the location in which they were discovered, a cemetery established in the previously sacrosanct processional way leading to Umm el-Qaab, they indicate that Osirian belief was no longer closely connected with the latter site at that time. Conversely, an inscribed ostracon discovered by chance in a spoil heap or in any other uncontrolled archaeological context is more problematic as a source of information. As these examples show, the amount that we can learn from a particular written source is largely determined by its material context. Every ancient source has a story to tell. At Abydos, perhaps more so than many other sites in Egypt, if we separate a written source from its material context, we are only hearing half of that story.

7.4. THEBES

7.4.1. Thebes as a political centre

Thebes (modern Luxor, ancient Egyptian *Wꜣs.t*, Coptic ⲛⲏ, Greek *Διὸς πόλις*) is situated approximately 500 km south of present-day Cairo. For much of the Old Kingdom, it was a relatively unimportant town in the fourth Upper Egyptian nome, although it

appears to have gained the status of nome capital by the sixth dynasty.[464] The city rose to greater prominence during the First Intermediate Period when a family of local rulers managed to consolidate their power over first Upper Egypt and then, by defeating their northern counterparts based in Herakleopolis, the entire country. The members of this family are known collectively as the eleventh dynasty. The ruler who succeeded in reuniting Egypt, thus inaugurating the Middle Kingdom, was Mentuhotep II (*c.*2055–2004 BC). For the next few years, Thebes served as the Egyptian capital. It lost this role, however, when the founder of the twelfth dynasty, Amenemhet I (*c.*1985–1956), moved his seat of government to a site further north in the Fayum region called Itj-tawi.[465]

In subsequent periods of Egyptian history, Thebes enjoyed further brief spells of political importance, chiefly in less settled times when Egypt was divided into separate northern and southern kingdoms. During the Second Intermediate Period, it was the base of the rulers of the seventeenth dynasty who resisted the domination of the Hyksos invaders. The last of these Theban monarchs, Ahmose (*c.*1550–1525), ultimately succeeded in expelling them and reuniting Egypt. But with the reunification of the country, the capital moved north once again.[466] During the twenty-first dynasty, the chief priests of Amun at Thebes exercised a sort of unofficial control over the southern part of the country, in parallel with the actual kings who were based at Tanis in the delta.[467] Later on in the Third Intermediate Period, the south gained full independence under the Theban rulers of the twenty-third dynasty.[468] They retained power, albeit

[464] For Thebes in the Old Kingdom, see e.g. R. Soliman, *Old and Middle Kingdom Theban Tombs* (London, 2009), pp. 1–28; N. Strudwick and H. Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt: A Guide to the Tombs and Temples of Ancient Luxor* (London, 1999), pp. 19–22; P. Vlčková, 'Theban Area Before 2000 BCE', in J. Mynářová and P. Onderka (eds), *Thebes: City of Gods and Pharaohs* (Prague, 2007), pp. 37–43; A. Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom: Philological Aspects of a Continuous Tradition in Egyptian Mortuary Literature* 2 (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2013), pp. 550–1.

[465] Vlčková in Mynářová and Onderka (eds), *Thebes*, pp. 43–7; P. Vlčková, 'The Theban Area in the End of the 11th Dynasty and in the Middle Kingdom', in Mynářová and Onderka (eds), *Thebes*, pp. 49–61; Strudwick and Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt*, pp. 22–8; S. Seidlmayer, 'The First Intermediate Period', in I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 123–36; G. Callender, 'The Middle Kingdom Renaissance', ibid., pp. 137–47; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, pp. 551–4.

[466] J. Mynářová, 'Thebes in the Second Intermediate Period', in Mynářová and Onderka (eds), *Thebes*, pp. 71–9; Strudwick and Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt*, pp. 28–31; J. Bourriau, 'The Second Intermediate Period', in Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 191–206.

[467] J. Taylor, 'The Third Intermediate Period', ibid., pp. 325–8; K. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 BC)* (Warminster, 1986), pp. xiv–xxii, 255–86, and 531–41; K. Kitchen, 'The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt: An Overview of Fact and Fiction', in G. Broekman, R. Demarée, and O. Kaper (eds), *The Libyan Period in Egypt, Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21st–24th Dynasties: Proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25–27 October 2007* (Leuven, 2009), pp. 191–6; K. Jansen-Winkeln, 'Dynasty 21', in E. Hornung, R. Krauss, and D. Warburton (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 218–33.

[468] D. Aston, 'Takeloth II, a King of the Herakleopolitan/Theban Twenty-Third Dynasty Revisited: The Chronology of Dynasties 22 and 23', in Broekman, Demarée, and Kaper (eds), *The Libyan Period in Egypt*, pp. 1–28, with references to earlier literature, in particular, the same author's 'Takeloth II: A King of the "Theban" Twenty-Third Dynasty?', *JEA* 75 (1989), pp. 139–53.

over a steadily shrinking tract of territory, until finally displaced by the Kushites in the middle of the eighth century.[469] During the subsequent years of conflict between Kush and Assyria, although it was nominally under the rule of one state or the other, the Theban region appears to have enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy, especially under the mayoralty of the fourth god's servant of Amun Montuemhat. This was only curtailed in 656 BC, when Egypt was unified again by the Saite king Psammetichus I.[470]

Thebes was frequently used as a base by rebels and would-be kings. Near the end of the New Kingdom, the viceroy of Kush Panehsy, who had himself been sent to the southern city to put an end to civil unrest there, set himself up as *de facto* ruler.[471] There were outbreaks of revolt at Thebes at various points during the Third Intermediate Period, as attested by sources like the Banishment Stela (Louvre C 256) and the chronicle of Prince Osorkon inscribed on the Bubastite Portal at Karnak.[472] A usurper called Psammuthis, probably of Theban origin, managed to seize power in the south for a brief period during the twenty-ninth dynasty.[473] Between 205 and 186 BC, Upper Egypt was controlled by the rebel kings Harwennefer and Ankhwennefer. They used Thebes as a power base as well.[474] Another rebel king, Harsiesis, also known as Harsiesis-Siosiris, briefly held sway there between 132/1 and 129 BC.[475] Thebes witnessed further uprisings in both the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, although in no case did these result in the restoration of political power to that city.[476] Nevertheless, the fact that it was the focal point of so many rebellions suggests that possession of Thebes was thought to confer a kind of legitimacy on those who exercised control there.

[469] G. Broekman, 'Takeloth III and the End of the 23rd Dynasty', in Broekman, Demarée, and Kaper (eds), *The Libyan Period in Egypt*, pp. 91–101. For the idea that the indigenous rulers in Hermopolis and/or Herakleopolis at the time of the Kushite king Piankhi's invasion of Egypt may have been displaced members of this Theban line of kings, see P. Spencer and A. Spencer, 'Notes on Late Libyan Egypt', *JEA* 72 (1986), p. 201; D. Aston and J. Taylor, 'The Family of Takeloth III and the "Theban" Twenty-Third Dynasty', in A. Leahy (ed.), *Libya and Egypt c.1300–750 BC* (London, 1990), pp. 146–7; Jansen-Winkeln in Hornung, Krauss, and Warburton (eds), *Ancient Egyptian Chronology*, pp. 253–6.

[470] Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 BC)*, pp. 390–404. On Montuemhat, see the detailed study of J. Leclant, *Montouemhat: Quatrième prophète d'Amon, prince de la ville* (Cairo, 1961).

[471] Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 BC)*, pp. 247–8.

[472] See R. Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy: Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period* (Atlanta, 2009), pp. 124–9 and 348–77, with references to earlier literature.

[473] C. Traunecker, 'Essai sur l'histoire de la XXIXe dynastie', *BIFAO* 79 (1979), pp. 395–436.

[474] For these kings, see P. Pestman, 'Haronnophris and Chaonnophris: Two Indigenous Pharaohs in Ptolemaic Egypt (205–186 B.C.)', in S. Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne, 1995), pp. 101–37; K. Vandorpe, 'City of Many a Gate, Harbour for Many a Rebel', ibid., pp. 232–3; F. Coppens, 'Herwennefer and Ankhwennefer: Thebes and the Last Native Pharaohs (206–186 BCE)', in Mynářová and Onderka (eds), *Thebes*, pp. 211–13; also section 6.14.3.

[475] Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 233–4; C. Traunecker, 'Le Pap. Spiegelberg et l'évolution des liturgies thébaines', ibid., p. 200.

[476] Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 234–6. For revolts in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt more generally, see A.-E. Véïsse, *Les 'révoltes égyptiennes': Recherches sur les troubles intérieurs en Égypte du règne de Ptolémée III à la conquête romaine* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2004).

7.4.2. Local forms of traditional Egyptian religion at Thebes: the east bank of the river

Although its political fortunes waxed and waned, Thebes remained an important religious centre throughout most of Egyptian history. Its chief deity was the god Amun, for whom a Theban temple is first attested in the eleventh dynasty.[477] With the advent of the twelfth dynasty, he was elevated to the status of a major state god. After a temporary eclipse during the reign of Akhenaten,[478] he became even more important in the Ramesside Period, when a new conception of him arose, according to which he was both a transcendent deity, immanent in all things, and a personal god who helped individuals in time of need.[479] The two main temples of Amun were located at Karnak and Luxor on the east side of the river.[480] At the former he was worshipped as Amun-Re, king of the gods, lord of the thrones of the two lands; at the latter as Amun of Opet.[481]

Amun was involved in a number of important Theban rites. Prominent among these was the Opet Festival, celebrated in the second and third months of the inundation season, Paophi and Hathor, during which the god was conducted in a festive procession by land and water from Karnak to his Luxor temple and back again. The chief purpose of this visit was to renew the *ka* of the deity.[482] Another important ritual occasion was the Festival of the Valley, celebrated annually during Paone, the second month of the harvest season, from the Middle Kingdom onwards. It was an occasion when the living would visit the cemeteries on the western side of the river and commemorate their deceased ancestors with elaborate meals at their tombs. Kings and deities whose cult centres were on the east bank would pay homage to their deceased relatives at this time as well. As state god, Amun played a leading role in this event.[483] A third important Theban feast was the Festival of the Decade.

[477] Vlčková in Mynářová and Onderka (eds), *Thebes*, p. 39; M. Ullmann, 'Thebes: Origins of a Ritual Landscape', in P. Dorman and B. Bryan (eds), *Sacred Space and Sacred Function in Ancient Thebes* (Chicago, 2007), pp. 3–4; Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, p. 554.

[478] See section 5.1.1.

[479] See J. Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom: Re, Amun and the Crisis of Polytheism* (London and New York, 1995), pp. 133–210.

[480] For descriptions of these, see Strudwick and Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt*, pp. 44–71.

[481] The different forms in which Amun was worshipped at Thebes are described in D. Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun: Egyptian Temple Construction and Theology in Roman Thebes* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 52–69.

[482] J. Darnell, 'Opet Festival', in J. Dieleman and W. Wendrich (eds), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2010), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4739r3fr, pp. 1–15; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 386–8; W. Waitkus, 'Das Opetfest nach dem Neuen Reich', in M. Bárta and H. Küllmer (eds), *Diachronic Trends in Ancient Egyptian History: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Eva Pardey* (Prague, 2013), pp. 136–46.

[483] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 179 note 5, and literature cited there, to which add Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 389–91.

This took place every ten days when Amun, in the form of Amenopet, crossed the river from the east to the west bank to offer libations to his forefathers, the primordial deity Kematef and the Ogdoad.[484]

Amun formed part of a triad at Thebes along with the goddess Mut, who had her own temple precinct to the south of Karnak.[485] This incorporated a crescent-shaped sacred lake called the *isheru*, a characteristic feature of temples devoted to goddesses like her who embodied the dangerous power of the eye of the sun god.[486] The third member of the Theban triad was the god Khonsu, whose temple was situated in the southwest corner of Amun's Karnak precinct. Khonsu was venerated in a number of different special forms, including Khonsu in Thebes Neferhotep, Khonsu who exercises authority in Thebes, Khonsu-Shu, and Khonsu the child. The last three had their own separate sanctuaries in the vicinity of Amun's temple precinct or, in the case of Khonsu the child, within that of Mut.[487]

Another important Theban deity was Montu, whose temple precinct was situated to the north of that of Amun at Karnak. He formed part of a distinct divine triad, along with the goddess Maat (or sometimes Rattawi) and the child god Harpre.[488] Other divinities venerated on the east bank at Thebes included Ptah,[489] the goddess Opet, sometimes called Opetweret, 'Opet the great',[490] and a deified human being, Imhotep, the vizier and architect of the third dynasty ruler Djoser, who was noted for his healing powers.[491] The temple of Ptah was situated to the north of that of Amun at Karnak, that of Opet immediately to the west of the temple of Khonsu.[492] Imhotep did not have a sanctuary of his own on the east bank, but hymns to him are inscribed on one of the gates leading to the temple of Ptah, who was regarded as his father.[493]

[484] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 183–4 and 194–5; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 55–8 and 385–6.

[485] Ibid., pp. 167–74.

[486] See ibid., pp. 168–70; A. Tillier, 'Notes sur l'*icherou*', *ENiM* 3 (2010), pp. 167–76; Leitz, *Geographisch-osirianische Prozessionen aus Philae, Dendara und Athribis*, pp. 440–1. On the dangerous aspect of Mut, see R. Jasnow and M. Smith, '"As for Those Who Have Called Me Evil, Mut Will Call Them Evil": Orgiastic Cultic Behaviour and its Critics in Ancient Egypt (PSI Inv. [provv.] D 114a + PSI Inv. 3056 verso)', *Enchoria* 32 (2010/11), pp. 9–53.

[487] Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 214–15; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 80–109; D. Klotz, 'The Theban Cult of Chonsu the Child in the Ptolemaic Period', in Thiers (ed.), *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 1, pp. 95–134.

[488] Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 212–13; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 109–13, 142, 155–9, and 204–12.

[489] Ibid., pp. 202–4. [490] Ibid., pp. 186–90. [491] Ibid., pp. 119–21.

[492] See Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 214–16 and map on p. 217.

[493] See S. Sauneron, 'Un hymne à Imouthes', *BIFAO* 63 (1965), pp. 73–87; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 252–8.

7.4.3. Local forms of traditional Egyptian religion at Thebes: the west bank of the river

Most temples on the west bank at Thebes were originally dedicated to the mortuary cults of the rulers of the Middle and New Kingdoms.[494] However, some deities possessed temples on that side of the river as well. Hathor had a sanctuary at Deir el-Medina, as did Thoth at Qasr el-Aguz and Isis at Deir el-Shelwit.[495] But over time, the New Kingdom mortuary temples were adapted to serve divine cults as well. A small eighteenth dynasty sanctuary later incorporated in the mortuary temple complex of the twentieth dynasty king Ramesses III at Medinet Habu came to be regarded as the burial place of Kematef and the Ogdoad, the eight primordial deities from whom Amun was descended.[496] As noted in section 7.4.2, Amenopet would cross the river every ten days in order to offer libations to them at the Festival of the Decade. A syncretistic form of Amun, Amun-Min or Min-Amun, was venerated at Medinet Habu, as was the bull of the god Montu. Amun-Re also had a cult at the Ramesseum, the mortuary temple of Ramesses II of the nineteenth dynasty.[497] Finally, at Deir el-Bahri, the mortuary temple of the eighteenth dynasty ruler Hatshepsut, one room was devoted to the worship of Imhotep and Amenhotep son of Hapu, the deified chief architect of Amenhotep III, and another to that of the goddess Hathor.[498]

Sokar, a chthonic deity of Memphite origin, was venerated in a number of temples on the Theban west bank, some dedicated to the mortuary cults of New Kingdom rulers, others to those of deities.[499] The Festival of Sokar was celebrated annually during the second half of the month of Khoiak, concurrently with the Osiris mysteries on the east bank of the river. The culmination of this event was a joyous procession in which the god was conveyed in triumph in his *henu*-bark on the twenty-sixth day of the month in question. Participants in the festival, who included both the living and the

[494] For a concise description of these, see Strudwick and Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt*, pp. 72–91.

[495] Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, p. 228; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 117, 126–30, and 215–17.

[496] Ibid., pp. 133–42 and 174–85; Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 225; Smith, *On the Primaeval Ocean*, pp. 85–6; J. McClain, 'The Cosmological Inscriptions of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes and the Cultic Evolution of the Temple of *Djeser-set*', in P. Dorman and B. Bryan (eds), *Perspectives on Ptolemaic Thebes: Papers from the Theban Workshop 2006* (Chicago, 2011), pp. 69–96; C. Zivie-Coche, 'L'Ogdoade thébaine à l'époque ptolémaïque et ses antécédents', in Thiers (ed.), *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 1, pp. 167–225; C. Zivie-Coche, 'L'Ogdoade à Thèbes à l'époque ptolémaïque (II): Le périptère du petit temple de Médinet Habou', in C. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 2 (Montpellier, 2013), pp. 227–84.

[497] Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 225–7; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 75–8.

[498] Ibid., pp. 51–2 and 119–21; Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 227–8. For the cult of Imhotep and Amenhotep son of Hapu at Deir el-Bahri, see also A. Łajtar, 'The Cult of Amenhotep Son of Hapu and Imhotep in Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods', in A. Delattre and P. Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…': Thèbes et sa région aux époques hellénistique, romaine et byzantine* (Brussels, 2008), pp. 113–23; A. Łajtar, *Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods: A Study of an Egyptian Temple Based on Greek Sources* (Warsaw, 2006).

[499] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 212–14.

dead, hoped to be able to follow Sokar in his procession, wearing garlands of onions around their necks. The feast is attested from the New Kingdom up until the Graeco-Roman Period.[500]

7.4.4. The cult of Osiris at Thebes

There is no evidence for a temple of Osiris at Thebes until the first millennium BC. As we saw in section 6.12.1, a number of small chapels dedicated to that god were built at Karnak in the Third Intermediate Period and later. These are located to the north and northeast of the temple of Amun. The majority of them date to the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth dynasties. The catacombs where the Osiris figures fabricated during the god's Khoiak mysteries were buried, known as 'the great place', were situated to the northeast of Amun's temple as well.[501] The figures in question were made nearby, in the small temple of Osiris of Coptos, which was constructed in the Ptolemaic Period or slightly earlier.[502] The mysteries of Osiris were celebrated annually at Thebes, as they were at other cities throughout Egypt. A papyrus dating to the beginning of the Roman Period, now in the Louvre (N 3176), provides us with valuable information as to how and where the rites were performed there.[503]

According to local tradition Osiris was born in the temple of Opet on the first epagomenal day, the day of the pure bull in his field. His mother Nut was identified with the goddess to whom that temple was dedicated.[504] Another local tradition

[500] Ibid., pp. 392–8; Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, pp. 56–7; Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, pp. 207 and 224.

[501] See Coulon in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 11 and 14, with map showing Osirian cult places in Karnak on pp. 18–19; F. Leclère, 'Le quartier de l'Osireion de Karnak: Analyse du context topographique', ibid., pp. 239–68. The latter provides an extensive bibliography on the catacombs in note 1 on pp. 239–40, to which should be added L. Coulon, 'La nécropole osirienne de Karnak sous les Ptolémées', in Delattre and Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, pp. 17–32; and L. Coulon, 'Une stele déposée par un grand chef libyen près de la nécropole d'Osiris à Karnak', in C. Zivie-Coche and I. Guermeur (eds), *'Parcourir l'éternité': Hommages à Jean Yoyotte* 1 (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 382–5.

[502] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 201–2 and 251–2.

[503] P. Barguet, *Le papyrus N. 3176 (S) du Musée du Louvre* (Cairo, 1962), with additional bibliography in Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 212, 384, and 392. For the date of the text (not 'the first two centuries CE' as stated by Klotz), see L. Coulon and L. Gabolde, 'Une stèle sur le parvis du temple d'Opet à Karnak', *RdE* 55 (2004), p. 9 note 20. On the Khoaik rites performed for Osiris at Karnak, see also A. Kucharek, 'Auf der Suche nach Konstruktionen der Macht: Die Festprozession des Osiris in Karnak', in J. Maram, C. Juwig, H. Schwengel, and U. Thaler (eds), *Constructing Power—Architecture, Ideology and Social Practice* (Hamburg, 2006), pp. 117–33, and literature cited there.

[504] C. de Wit, *Les inscriptions du temple d'Opet, à Karnak* 3 (Brussels, 1968), pp. 146–7; Coulon in Thiers (ed.), *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 1, p. 4; E. Laroze, 'Osiris et le temple d'Opet: Apports de l'étude architecturale', in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, p. 219; A. Rickert, *Gottheit und Gabe: Eine ökonomische Prozession im Soubassement des Opettempels von Karnak und ihre Parallele in Kôm Ombo* (Wiesbaden, 2011), p. 22; Leitz, *Geographisch-osirianische Prozessionen aus Philae, Dendara und Athribis*, pp. 70–1; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 186–94.

maintained that his body was reconstituted there after his death.[505] Thus the complementary processes of birth and rebirth (as a consequence of the restoration of corporeal integrity) were linked together in that sanctuary.[506] But veneration of Osiris at Karnak was not restricted to sanctuaries dedicated exclusively to him. Another important venue for the performance of Osirian rites there was the edifice built by the twenty-fifth dynasty ruler Taharqa at the side of the sacred lake, where a ritual that involved throwing balls of clay to the four cardinal points helped to ensure the protection of the god's burial mound.[507] Scenes depicting the performance of rites for Osiris appear on the walls of a number of other temples at Karnak as well, and the accompanying texts supply us with valuable information about his cult. A good example is provided by the three pairs of Osirian scenes on the propylon of the temple of Khonsu.[508]

Theban tradition maintained that Osiris was buried in the mound of Djeme. This designation referred specifically to the eighteenth dynasty temple at Medinet Habu, but was also used more generally to denote the adjacent parts of the west bank. The fact that Osiris was buried in the same place as Kematef, the primordial ancestor of Amun, led to him becoming the beneficiary of a cult similar to that god's. He too received libations at ten-day intervals, only from his son Horus rather than from Amenopet.[509] Some maintain that Osiris was actually assimilated to Kematef, and Horus to Amenopet, but this has been disputed.[510] What is clear, nevertheless, is that the libations poured out by Horus for his father each decade assumed such significance in the Theban region that occasionally they were mentioned in ritual texts to the exclusion of those offered by Amenopet.[511]

Although Osiris and Sokar were originally distinct deities, a composite form Sokar-Osiris is attested from the First Intermediate Period onward.[512] By the Graeco-Roman Period, the two gods were effectively one. As a result, Sokar figures prominently in the mysteries of Osiris at Thebes,[513] while Osiris can replace Sokar as the patron deity of the latter's festival. The conflation of Osiris and Sokar is neatly illustrated by texts in which each is said to occupy the sacred bark traditionally associated with the other, Osiris the *henu*-bark of Sokar and Sokar the *neshmet*-bark of Osiris.[514] Further

[505] Rickert, *Gottheit und Gabe*, pp. 22–3; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 195–6; F.-R. Herbin, 'La renaissance d'Osiris au temple d'Opet *(P. Vatican Inv. 38608)*', *RdE* 54 (2003), pp. 96–8.

[506] On the complementarity of these two notions at Thebes, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 194; Coulon in Thiers (ed.), *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 1, pp. 1–18; F. Labrique, 'Les ancrages locaux d'Osiris selon les inscriptions du propylene de Khonsou à Karnak', in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 196–8.

[507] R. Parker, J. Leclant, and J.-C. Goyon, *The Edifice of Taharqa by the Sacred Lake of Karnak* (Providence and London, 1979), pp. 61–5 and plate 25.

[508] See Labrique in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, pp. 195–215.

[509] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 197–9.

[510] Ibid., p. 199.

[511] See e.g. Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, pp. 40–1, and literature cited there.

[512] See section 4.14.1.

[513] Coulon in Thiers (ed.), *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 1, pp. 10–11.

[514] Smith, *The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing*, pp. 55 and 57; Smith, *Papyrus Harkness (MMA 31.9.7)*, p. 198.

evidence of this phenomenon is provided by a passage in P. Leiden T 32, a manuscript of Theban origin dating to the first century AD, in which the deceased is told: 'You will see Osiris the great one of Djeme, the foremost in the west, during the festival of Sokar.'[515] Likewise, a text accompanying a scene that depicts the *henu*-bark of Sokar in the temple of Hathor at Deir el-Medina, dating to the reign of Ptolemy VI, says 'How very beautiful is this! Sokar shines in the *henu*-bark (twice). Happiness pervades the entire land, for Osiris is reconstituted in the great Opet by the gods.'[516]

7.4.5. Evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife at Thebes

7.4.5.1. Theban cemeteries

Most of our information about conceptions of the afterlife at Thebes comes from tombs and items of burial equipment deposited in them.[517] At all periods, the local cemeteries were located on the west side of the river. The earliest preserved tombs are two uninscribed mud brick mastabas of fourth dynasty date at the site of el-Tarif.[518] Five further Old Kingdom tombs cut into the rock at el-Khokha have been dated to the sixth dynasty.[519] Unlike the earlier mastabas, they have inscriptions, which give us some insight into their owners' beliefs about the hereafter. Among the deities mentioned in the sixth dynasty tombs at Thebes are Hathor, Anubis, Ptah-Sokar, and Montu. Osiris appears in two of them. In a scene in the tomb of the nomarch Khenti (TT 405), his wife Imi is called '*imakh* before Osiris lord of Busiris'.[520] In the tomb of the nomarch Ihy, he and two women, one of them his wife Imi, have the same epithet, along with others like '*imakh* before Montu', '*imakh* before Ptah-Sokar', and '*imakh* before the great god'.[521] These are the earliest references to Osiris in any context at Thebes.

The west side of the river continued to be used for the interment of the dead throughout the rest of Egyptian history, from the First Intermediate Period to the Roman Period. It is the site of numerous cemeteries and tombs, both royal and non-royal.[522] It is noteworthy

[515] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 411.

[516] P. du Bourguet and L. Gabolde, *Le temple de Deir al-Médîna* (Cairo, 2002), p. 59–60.

[517] This can be supplemented by other sorts of material, for example, graffiti inscribed in temples. See H. Thissen, *Die demotischen Graffiti von Medinet Habu: Zeugnisse zu Tempel und Kult im ptolemäischen Ägypten* (Sommerhausen, 1989), pp. 187–99.

[518] Soliman, *Old and Middle Kingdom Theban Tombs*, pp. 8–10; Vlčková in Mynářová and Onderka (eds), *Thebes*, pp. 39–41.

[519] Soliman, *Old and Middle Kingdom Theban Tombs*, pp. 12–28; Vlčková in Mynářová and Onderka (eds), *Thebes*, pp. 39–43; M. Saleh, *Three Old-Kingdom Tombs at Thebes* (Mainz am Rhein, 1977).

[520] Soliman, *Old and Middle Kingdom Theban Tombs*, p. 27; Saleh, *Three Old-Kingdom Tombs at Thebes*, p. 21 and plate 14.

[521] Ibid., pp. 24–5, plates 15 and 17–18.

[522] For overviews of these and the objects recovered from them, see N. Strudwick and J. Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis: Past, Present and Future* (London, 2003); E. Pischikova, J. Budka, and K. Griffin (eds), *Thebes in the First Millennium BC* (Cambridge, 2014). For a map of the Theban necropolis, see F. Kampp-Seyfried, 'The Theban Necropolis: An Overview of Topography and Tomb Development from the Middle Kingdom to the Ramesside Period', in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, p. 3, figure 1.

that Thebes remained the preferred location for royal burials in the New Kingdom, even though it was no longer Egypt's political capital. As the cemeteries grew more crowded and space was increasingly at a premium, the custom arose of reusing tombs of earlier date, in some instances for family or even mass burials. This practice was especially common in the later phases of Egyptian history.[523]

7.4.5.2. Texts for the afterlife from Thebes

Texts intended to benefit the deceased in the afterlife have been found in numerous Theban tombs. It is no exaggeration to say that we have more of these from Thebes than from any other site in Egypt. Some of the texts in question formed part of the decoration of the tomb itself. Others were inscribed on objects deposited in the tomb like sarcophagi, coffins, stelae, and papyri. Morales thinks that copies of Pyramid Text spells were already available for use by non-royal individuals at Thebes in the Old Kingdom, but we have no direct evidence for this.[524] The earliest attestation of Coffin Text spells there is on the coffin of Ashayt, the wife of the eleventh dynasty ruler Mentuhotep II.[525] Copies of such spells, along with others drawn from the Pyramid Texts, are preserved on a number of other Theban coffins of eleventh and twelfth dynasty date as well.[526]

The earliest copies of the Book of the Dead originate from Thebes. Although manuscripts and other objects inscribed with Book of the Dead spells have been found at other Egyptian sites, Thebes remains the most important single source for them, from their initial appearance down to the end of the Ptolemaic Period when copies of the Book of the Dead ceased to be produced.[527] Most of our evidence for the so-called underworld guides comes from Thebes as well.[528] In the New Kingdom, these compositions are attested primarily in royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings. Thereafter, however, they begin to appear more frequently in tombs and on burial equipment of non-royal individuals.

Well into the Graeco-Roman Period, Thebes continued to be an important centre, not only for the preservation and transmission of earlier Egyptian texts for the afterlife, but for the composition of new ones as well. The manuscript witnesses of a substantial

[523] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 42–4.

[524] Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, pp. 555–60.

[525] Ibid., p. 555; G. Lapp, 'Totentexte der Privatleute vom Ende des Alten Reiches bis zur 1. Zwischenzeit unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Sargkammern und Särgen', *SAK* 43 (2014), p. 222.

[526] Morales, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom* 2, pp. 555–600.

[527] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 14–15; J. Taylor (ed.), *Journey Through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London, 2010); S. Quirke, *Going Out in Daylight—prt m hrw: The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, Translation, Sources, Meanings* (London, 2013), especially pp. vii–xxviii; L. Gestermann, 'Aufgelesen: Die Anfänge des altägyptischen Totenbuchs', in B. Backes, I. Munro, and S. Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen: Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuch-Symposiums 2005* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 101–13; A. Gasse *apud* Gasse, Albert, Einaudi, Régen, and Traunecker, *ENiM* 8 (2015), pp. 39–40.

[528] See section 5.7.1.

number of the extant texts of this nature from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt are either exclusively or predominately of Theban provenance. These include the various letters for breathing,[529] the divine decrees promulgated for the dead by deities,[530] and the Book of Traversing Eternity,[531] all of which are attested in multiple copies. In addition there are many other works attested in only a single copy that have been found at Thebes, for instance, the various compendia of spells designed to permit the deceased to assume non-human forms, sometimes called books of transformation.[532]

7.4.6. Changing perceptions of Osiris as reflected in Theban sources

7.4.6.1. Osiris as ruler and helper of those in need

The texts described in section 7.4.5.2 provide abundant evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife at Thebes over a period of nearly two millennia. During that time, some changes in Egyptian perceptions of Osiris occurred, and these in turn had an impact on how the relationship between that god and the deceased was envisaged. As we saw in section 6.12.1, one important development of the first half of the first millennium BC was the increased emphasis on the royal aspect of Osiris, concomitant with a growing tendency to regard him not just as the ruler of the underworld, but as the ruler of this one as well. He was not seen as a distant or unapproachable king, moreover, but as a powerful patron or advocate who could be relied upon to defend the interests of his subjects. As a result, both the living and the dead felt confident in turning to him for aid in times of trouble. This development is reflected in the proliferation of small chapels and temples where Osiris was venerated with cult epithets like 'the saviour', 'rescuer of the afflicted', and 'the one who rescues his servant in the underworld'. There are antecedents for such a conception of Osiris in earlier periods of Egyptian history as well, but it becomes much more prevalent in the first millennium and later.

7.4.6.2. Osiris and Amun

Although much of the evidence for this new image of Osiris comes from Thebes, especially Karnak, it is by no means restricted to that city or its environs. Other sources in which it is attested come from Saqqara, Abydos, Philae, and Musawwarat es-Sufra, although admittedly these post-date their Theban counterparts.[533] One development of the first millennium BC which does appear to be specifically Theban, however, is the

[529] See F.-R. Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts* (London, 2008); Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 462–525.
[530] Ibid., pp. 599–609.
[531] Herbin, *Le livre de parcourir l'éternité*; Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 395–436.
[532] Ibid., pp. 610–49. See section 6.3. [533] See sections 6.11 and 6.12.1.

increasingly close relationship between Osiris and Amun, the chief god of that city, which begins to manifest itself during the period in question.[534] As a result, Amun takes on roles associated with Osiris, and vice versa. In a sense, each divinity shares his attributes with the other. The gods are shown being worshipped in conjunction on stelae,[535] and appear in the decoration of each other's temples as well.[536]

Coulon has suggested that the increased emphasis upon the royal aspect of Osiris in the first millennium BC may have been influenced by his association with Amun, who was the royal god par excellence.[537] One might go further and ask whether the related conception of Osiris as a saviour in time of need resulted from his association with Amun as well. As we have seen, the latter god was envisaged as both a transcendent deity and a helper of individuals from the Ramesside Period onward.[538] 'Rescuer of the afflicted', one of the cult epithets of Osiris in a chapel at Karnak dating to the twenty-fifth dynasty, is already attested for Amun in the New Kingdom.[539] In Book of the Dead Spell 162, one of the so-called supplementary spells of the Book of the Dead which is attested from the twenty-first dynasty onward, Amun is invoked as 'merciful god who comes to the one who calls him, who saves the wretched from affliction'.[540] This is one of a number of instances in the supplementary spells where Amun assumes the role of god of the underworld and requests for help and protection in the afterlife are addressed to him instead of Osiris.[541]

A further consequence of the increasingly close association of Osiris with Amun is that many rites involving the latter god are Osirianized. This applies to both the Feast of the Valley and the Festival of the Decade. The Osirianization of the former is illustrated by texts like P. BM EA 10209, a collection of offering formulas dating to the fourth century BC intended for use during the Valley Feast, where Osiris, not

[534] A. Wüthrich, *Éléments de théologie thébaine: Les chapitres supplémentaires du Livre des Morts* (Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 37–41 and 159–61; C. Traunecker, F. Le Saout, and O. Masson, *La chapelle d'Achôris à Karnak* 2 (Paris, 1981), pp. 138–42; F. Coppens, *The Wabet: Tradition and Innovation in Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman Period* (Prague, 2007), pp. 214–15 and 222; K. Cooney, 'The Edifice of Taharqa by the Sacred Lake: Ritual Function and the Role of the King', *JARCE* 37 (2000), pp. 41–2. According to S. Cauville, 'Les trois capitals—Osiris—Le roi', *RdE* 61 (2010), pp. 9–10 and 19, there are antecedents for this as early as the New Kingdom.

[535] See, for example, E. Graefe and M. Wassef, 'Eine fromme Stiftung für den Gott Osiris-der-seinen-Anhänger-in-der-Unterwelt-rettet aus dem Jahre 21 des Taharqa (670 v. Chr.)', *MDAIK* 35 (1979), p. 104, Abb. 1, and plate 17.

[536] The prominent role played by Amun in the decoration of the chapel of Osiris ruler of eternity in north Karnak is a good illustration. Cf. *PM* II², pp. 204–6; J. Leclant, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXVe dynastie dite éthiopienne* (Cairo, 1965), pp. 47–54; R. Fazzini, 'Addendum to the Discussions on the Chapel of Osiris Heqa-Djet', in Broekman, Demarée, and Kaper (eds), *The Libyan Period in Egypt*, pp. 446–7.

[537] Coulon in Thiers (ed.), *Documents de théologies thébaines tardives* 1, pp. 3–4.

[538] See Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom*, pp. 190–210; Wüthrich, *Éléments de théologie thébaine*, pp. 70–8; section 7.4.2.

[539] Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 2, p. 592.

[540] Wüthrich, *Éléments de théologie thébaine*, pp. 42–3 and 266, figure 11 (P. BM EA 10044, line 18).

[541] Ibid., pp. 37–8 and 137–41.

Amun, is the primary addressee.[542] Evidence for the Osirianization of the Festival of the Decade is provided by texts relating to that event in which the primordial deity Kematef is replaced by Osiris in the role of recipient of the libations and Amenopet by Horus in the role of libationer.[543] This phenomenon is further reflected in the growing connections between the Festival of the Decade and the Khoiak mysteries of Osiris, resulting in the incorporation of the former into the latter.[544]

Theban texts express the relationship between Osiris and Amun in various ways. They normally avoid using syncretistic formulations like Amun-Osiris or Osiris-Amun to do so, making it clear that this was not simply a matter of identity between the two.[545] In some texts, Osiris is called the heir of Amun.[546] As a lunar deity, he can be described as the replacement or deputy of the sun god.[547] Yet another way of expressing the relationship of the two divinities was to designate Amun as the *ba* of Osiris. In a scene in one of the crypts in the temple of Opet, for example, the ten *bas* of Amun irradiate a statue of Osiris with their energy. These are referred to collectively as 'the noble *ba* of Osiris'.[548] Likewise, in another inscription in that temple, Amun is said to be the hidden *ba* of Osiris.[549] A well-known representation in the temple of Opet shows Osiris lying on a bier with Amun hovering above him in the form of an ithyphallic human-headed bird.[550] This bird is identified as 'Amun-Re the noble *ba* of Osiris, who rests upon his corpse in the mansion of his begetting'.[551] Another text in that temple expands this slightly, calling him 'Amun-Re the noble *ba* of Osiris, who rests upon his corpse in the place of his begetting, who arises from his body as the falcon with dappled plumage'.[552]

The configuration of Amun and Osiris as *ba* and body respectively calls to mind that of Re and Osiris in precisely the same terms in the New Kingdom guides to the underworld and related sources. As the *ba* of Osiris, Re could be said to alight upon

[542] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 178–92; M. Smith, 'Whose Ritual? Osirian Texts and Texts Written for the Deceased in P. BM EA 10209: A Case Study', in B. Backes and J. Dieleman (eds), *Liturgical Texts for Osiris and the Deceased in Late Period and Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Wiesbaden, 2015), pp. 161–77.

[543] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 183–4; Wüthrich, *Éléments de théologie thébaine*, p. 40.

[544] L. Coulon, 'Deux versions monumentales de la liturgie des rites decadaires de Djémé provenant de Karnak', in Backes and Dieleman (eds), *Liturgical Texts for Osiris and the Deceased in Late Period and Graeco-Roman Egypt*, pp. 109–32, especially pp. 117–23.

[545] The syncretistic form Amun-Re-Wennefer is attested once in an inscription from the temple of Opet. See C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 1 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), p. 324. It is noteworthy that this form incorporates the specifically royal aspect of Osiris, Wennefer. Osiris-Amun appears in a list of forms of Osiris in P. Cairo 31169, recto, 7/6. See W. Spiegelberg, *CGC: Die demotischen Papyrus* (Strasbourg, 1906), plate 110. However, this text does not come from Thebes.

[546] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 194–5.

[547] Ibid., pp. 196–7. For the lunar Osiris as the deputy or successor of the solar deity, see also sections 4.14.3 and 5.12.1.

[548] Traunecker, Le Saout, and Masson, *La chapelle d'Achôris à Karnak* 2, p. 139.

[549] C. de Wit, *Les inscriptions du temple d'Opet, à Karnak* 1 (Brussels, 1958), p. 31; Traunecker, Le Saout, and Masson, *La chapelle d'Achôris à Karnak* 2, p. 139.

[550] C. de Wit, *Les inscriptions du temple d'Opet, à Karnak* 2 (Brussels, 1962), plate 4.

[551] De Wit, *Les inscriptions du temple d'Opet, à Karnak* 1, pp. 120–1.

[552] Ibid., p. 91.

his body for a brief period each night during the course of his journey through the underworld. As a result of their temporary union, Re subsequently emerged newly born at the eastern horizon each dawn, ready to sail through the sky once again, while Osiris remained in the underworld awaiting their next encounter, his body rejuvenated as a result of his contact with the sun god. One way of expressing this verbally was to say that Re rested in Osiris and Osiris rested in Re.[553] This formula was still employed in Theban texts during the Roman Period, so it would have been familiar to local theologians who were active at that time.[554]

The relationship between Re and Osiris as *ba* and body in the underworld guides of the New Kingdom provides a useful model for understanding the one between Amun and Osiris in later sources from Thebes. In the latter, just as in the former, a temporary union between two deities is envisaged, which renews the powers of both. The only difference is that Amun assumes the role of Re. The analogy of the union of Re and Osiris in the underworld also explains a statement in one of the texts from the temple of Opet quoted above. Some descriptions of the nocturnal encounter between Re and Osiris utilize the imagery of birth and rebirth. As a result of their meeting, Re is said to be reborn as Horus.[555] This conception is well illustrated by a scene in the Book of the Earth which depicts a falcon-headed divinity with a sun disk behind him emerging from the body of Osiris. The accompanying legend explains this with the words: 'Horus emerges from the corpse of his father.'[556] Likewise, in the temple of Opet, Amun-Re is said to arise from the body of Osiris as the falcon with dappled plumage. As is well known, this is a standard epithet of the god Horus in falcon form.[557]

The New Kingdom guides to the underworld elucidate another key aspect of the relationship between Amun and Osiris as well. In those texts, Re and Osiris do not stand on equal terms with each other. Rather, the sun god is pre-eminent and Osiris subordinate to him. Osiris is ruler of the underworld, but he exercises his authority there alongside and under the supervision of Re. The solar circuit consists of two parts: sky and underworld. Re has dominion over both parts, Osiris over only the second, and that under the solar deity's controlling influence. Thus it is ultimately Re who regulates the affairs of the underworld and issues commands to its inhabitants.[558]

Precisely the same is true of Amun and Osiris. The former is a transcendent deity who rules the entire cosmos. Traditionally this is divided into three parts: sky, earth, and underworld.[559] Therefore, Amun is as much the ruler of the last of these as Osiris.

[553] See section 5.7.2.

[554] See C. Zivie, *Le temple de Deir Chelouit* 3 (Cairo, 1986), p. 84, lines 4–5; Herbin, *RdE* 54 (2003), p. 124 and plate 9, line 19.

[555] See section 5.7.2.

[556] See J. Roberson, *The Ancient Egyptian Books of the Earth* (Atlanta, 2012), pp. 173 and 330. I think the reading *Ḥr* for the divine name here is more likely than the *bḥd.ty* proposed by him, although in either case a form of Horus is certainly involved.

[557] C. Leitz (ed.), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* 6 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2002), pp. 146–8.

[558] See section 5.9.

[559] Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom*, pp. 174–8.

Even more so, in fact, since his authority is universal. This explains why Amun is seen to regulate the affairs of the land of the dead in some Theban sources of the first millennium BC and later, just as Re is in the New Kingdom underworld guides. Not only can he issue decrees to Osiris and the inhabitants of the west concerning deceased individuals, ordering that they be admitted into their company,[560] he can also give commands in respect of Osiris himself, instructing that he be installed as ruler of the underworld.[561] In other words, Osiris governs by favour of Amun. Thus, however closely the two gods are associated, there is a clear difference between them in terms of the positions that they occupy in the divine hierarchy.

7.4.7. The latest evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife at Thebes

7.4.7.1. The latest Theban texts for the afterlife

When did belief in the Osirian hereafter come to an end at Thebes? The latest precisely dated Theban text for the afterlife of any significant length is P. Bibliothèque Nationale 149. This was inscribed in demotic for a man called Pamonthes. No titles are recorded for him. A note at the end of the text says that it was written for him by his son Monkores on 17 October AD 63.[562] The papyrus preserves three compositions: a partial copy of a text usually found in conjunction with the Book of Traversing Eternity, and versions of Spells 125 and 128 of the Book of the Dead.[563]

Another lengthy Theban manuscript, P. Leiden T 32, was inscribed in hieratic for a man called Harsiesis, who was a priest in the cults of Amun-Re and other deities. The papyrus mentions one precise date: 26 November, 21 BC. This is not the date when it was written, however. It is either the date when Harsiesis was born, or the date when he says that, having reached the age of twenty-eight years and four months, he was promised an additional fifty-four years and four months of life by Amun-Re. The text is ambiguous and there is disagreement among modern commentators on this point.[564] Harsiesis claims to have survived into the fourth month of his eighty-third year. If he did actually reach this advanced age, and we assume that P. Leiden T 32 was written shortly thereafter, then the manuscript must date either to around AD 62 (if Harsiesis was born in 21 BC) or AD 34 (if the year in question marked his twenty-eighth birthday). The greater part of P. Leiden T 32 is devoted to a copy of the Book of Traversing Eternity. Some shorter texts are appended to this, including a biographical

[560] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 599–606; B. Gunn, 'The Decree of Amonrasonthēr for Neskhons', *JEA* 41 (1955), pp. 83–105; W. Golénischeff, *CGC: Papyrus hiératiques* (Cairo, 1927), pp. 169–209.

[561] Ibid., pp. 209–15. For a similar decree preserved in a papyrus from Meir rather than Thebes, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 67–9.

[562] Ibid., p. 437.

[563] Ibid., pp. 438–42. For the identification of Spell 128, see J. Quack, 'A New Demotic Translation of (Excerpts of) a Chapter of the *Book of the Dead*', *JEA* 100 (2014), pp. 381–93.

[564] See discussion in Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 397–9.

notice which provides the information concerning the manuscript owner's life discussed above. In addition to the Leiden papyrus, Harsiesis also possessed three other papyri inscribed with texts for the afterlife: the Letter for Breathing Which Isis Made for her Brother Osiris and the First and Second Letters for Breathing.[565] It may be presumed that these are of approximately the same date as his copy of the Book of Traversing Eternity.

A further Theban manuscript which should be mentioned here is P. Boulaq 3. This was inscribed in hieratic with a version of the Embalming Ritual, a ritual text employed during the mummification of the deceased. It was ultimately acquired by a man called Hatres who was a priest in the cults of Amen-Re and other deities, but it was not originally written expressly for him. Instead, his name was inserted in blank spaces left for that purpose by a different hand after it came into his possession.[566] P. Boulaq 3 does not bear a precise date. On the basis of palaeography, its two hands have been assigned to the late first century or early second century AD.[567] However, some think the owner of that text is identical with another Hatres who was buried in a wooden coffin found at Thebes, since the parents of both have the same names.[568] A horoscope inside this coffin shows that the owner was born in the first half of October AD 93. Two demotic inscriptions on its lid record his age at death as thirty-one years, five months, and twenty-five days. Thus he must have died in AD 125. If the owner of this coffin and the owner of P. Boulaq 3 are the same person, then the Boulaq manuscript of the Embalming Ritual, irrespective of the date when its main text was actually written, was still in use as late as the end of the first quarter of the second century AD.[569] Two other papyri inscribed for a priest called Hatres have been attributed to the owner of P. Boulaq 3 as well.[570] One preserves a copy of the Second Letter for Breathing,[571] the other a copy of the First Letter for Breathing, a hymn to the sun god, and Book of the Dead Spells 72 and 162.[572] If this attribution is correct, then those papyri must be roughly contemporary with the Boulaq papyrus.

In addition to the texts just cited, which are either precisely dated themselves or have been linked with one that is precisely dated, there are several shorter texts for the afterlife from Thebes which have been assigned to the late first century or early second century AD on the basis of their palaeography.[573] Some of these are written in hieratic,[574] others in demotic.[575] One particularly interesting group among the latter is

[565] Ibid., p. 397. [566] Ibid., pp. 215–17.
[567] See S. Töpfer, *Das Balsamierungsritual* (Wiesbaden, 2015), p. 32.
[568] Ibid., pp. 25–31. For doubts about this identification, see Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 216–17 and 515.
[569] Töpfer, *Das Balsamierungsritual*, p. 32. [570] Ibid., pp. 23–5.
[571] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 515. [572] Ibid., pp. 590–3.
[573] The occurrence of the locution 'Hathor of NN' in a manuscript is sometimes used as a criterion for assigning it to this period. See, for example, Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts*, pp. 5 note 67 and 76 note 150. But this is locution is not specific to the Roman Period. As we saw in section 6.6.8.1, it is already attested in the twenty-third dynasty.
[574] e.g. Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, nos. 31, 34, 37, and 38.
[575] Ibid., nos. 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, and 59.

distinguished by the use of a short formula requesting that the individual for whom the text was written be admitted to the company of those of the west and granted the privileges that they enjoy. These include serving Osiris, being among his praised ones, and sharing in the libations poured out on his offering tables. The texts were meant to function as passports or letters of recommendation. They were buried with the deceased so that they could take them with them and present them on their arrival in the underworld. More than twenty specimens are known. Most are inscribed on papyri, but they can occur on coffins as well.[576]

Some clues help us to date this particular group of texts with greater precision. One specimen, P. Munich MÄS 826, written for a woman called Senhoros, is illustrated with two vignettes. The first, inserted below the text, depicts a female figure.[577] Some think that this is the deceased herself, others maintain that it is the goddess Nut. What is significant from our perspective is that the figure has bare breasts which are shown in the form of two circles. Similar female figures occur on other items of burial equipment from this time, but their breasts are normally covered.[578] The only exception is the female figure on the coffin of a man called Soter (BM EA 6705), where the breasts are depicted in the same way as in the vignette of the Munich papyrus.[579] As will be discussed in section 7.4.7.2, this object is part of an important group of coffins, shrouds, papyri, and other objects found in a re-used tomb in the Theban necropolis.

One of Soter's children, a daughter called Sensaos, is known to have died on 15 July AD 109, aged 16 years, 2 months, and 9 days.[580] Another, a son called Petamenophis, died on 2 June AD 116, aged 21 years, 4 months, and 22 days.[581] Soter himself, being a generation older, is likely to have predeceased them. Presumably, he died near the end of the first century AD or the beginning of the second, which will also be the date when his coffin was decorated. His son Petamenophis was born on 11 January AD 95, so he must still have been alive at least nine months before that. In view of the close iconographic parallel between the coffin of Soter and P. Munich MÄS 826, we are probably justified in assuming that the two are more or less contemporary, or at least that no great interval of time separated the production of one from the other.

[576] See ibid., pp. 557–9; Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 638–46, 674–701, and 781–92; F. Scalf, *Passports to Eternity: Formulaic Demotic Funerary Texts and the Final Phase of Egyptian Funerary Literature in Roman Egypt* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2014); J. Dieleman, 'Scribal Routine in Two Demotic Documents for Breathing', in S. Lippert and M. Stadler (eds), *Gehilfe des Thot: Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zu seinem 75. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden, 2014), pp. 29–42.

[577] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 561–4; Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 684–6, both with references to earlier literature.

[578] The female figure on the coffin of Hatres discussed elsewhere in this section has bare breasts, but these are shown in side perspective. See Töpfer, *Das Balsamierungsritual*, p. 28, Abb. 4.

[579] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, figure 11 between pp. 206–7; Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts* 3, plate 47A.

[580] Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts*, pp. 8–9; K. van Landuyt, 'The Soter Family: Genealogy and Onomastics', in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, p. 75.

[581] Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts*, p. 7; van Landuyt in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, p. 75.

The second vignette on the Munich papyrus depicts a falcon hovering above the deceased's mummy. This motif appears for the first time on the coffin of Sensaos, the daughter of Soter (Leiden M 75).[582] As we have seen, she died in AD 109. Thus the motif was already in existence by then, if not before. So its occurrence on P. Munich MÄS 826 does not rule out a date for that papyrus like the one proposed in the preceding paragraph. Because several of the other papyri inscribed with the letter of recommendation have similar hands to that of the Munich papyrus, they are probably of roughly the same date as it. This means that we can assign most, if not all, exemplars of this text written on papyrus to the earlier part of the second century AD with a reasonable degree of confidence.[583]

Some specimens of the letter inscribed on coffins, however, are later than this. The one on a coffin now in Florence (no. 2165) is accompanied by a Greek inscription stating that its owner was born in August AD 162 and survived until the age of thirty-two. This means that he must have died in or around AD 194.[584] Presumably his coffin was inscribed at about the same time. Other coffins in Florence inscribed with this text have been dated to the mid- or late second century AD as well, but here the dating is less secure since it is based solely on stylistic criteria.[585] As far as one can judge, there are no specimens of the letter later than those just described. Stadler's suggestion that some examples on papyrus may date to the third century AD seems improbable to me on palaeographical grounds.[586]

A coffin in the form of a lion-headed mummy bed now in Berlin (Äg. Inv. 12442) is elaborately decorated on all four sides with scenes illustrating various aspects of the Osirian afterlife. These include the weighing of the deceased's heart on a scale, purification by Horus and Thoth, and induction into the underworld by Anubis. The scenes are accompanied by copious texts written in hieroglyphs, some of which can be paralleled in other sources. These make frequent reference to Osiris.[587] The bed was purchased on the antiquities market, so its provenance is uncertain, but Kurth suggests it may have come from Thebes.[588] The dating of the object is uncertain as well. Kurth proposes, with due reserve, a date in the middle of the second century AD.[589] If his dating and provenance are correct, then the bed is striking testimony to the skill of the

[582] Unfortunately, the falcon is not visible in any published image of this object. See Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts* 3, plate 49A; M. Raven, *De dodencultus van het Oude Egypte* (Amsterdam, 1992), pp. 80–1.

[583] I am very grateful to Jónatan Ortiz García for pointing out the iconographic parallels between P. Munich MÄS 826 and the coffins of Soter and Sensaos discussed here, and for drawing my attention to their implications for the dating of the papyrus and the related texts.

[584] Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 639–42, especially p. 641 on the date.

[585] Ibid., pp. 642–6.

[586] M. Stadler, 'Fünf neue funeräre Kurztexte (Papyri Britisches Museum EA 10121, 10198, 10415, 10421a, b, 10426a) und eine Zwischenbilanz zu dieser Textgruppe', in F. Hoffmann and H. Thissen (eds), *Res Severa Verum Gaudium: Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, 2004), p. 554.

[587] See D. Kurth, *Materialien zum Totenglauben im römerzeitlichen Ägypten* (Hützel, 2010), pp. 138–94.

[588] Ibid., p. 191. [589] Ibid., p. 192.

Theban craftsmen who were still able to produce burial equipment with such a complex and sophisticated decorative programme as late in the Roman Period as this. Another lion-headed mummy bed, purchased at Luxor and now in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, has decoration of a somewhat cruder character and fewer texts than its Berlin counterpart. This has been dated to the middle of the second century as well.[590]

7.4.7.2. The Soter group

As noted in section 7.4.5.1, the west bank of Thebes continued to be employed for burials into the Roman Period.[591] Due to considerations of space, and perhaps other reasons as well,[592] existing tombs were frequently reused for the interment of families or even larger groups at this time. One of the best-known examples of such a family interment is provided by the so-called Soter group. This designation refers to an assemblage of burial goods belonging to an important Theban official and members of his family extending over a number of generations who were interred along with him.[593] It is generally accepted that these were discovered in TT 32, a rock-cut tomb at el-Khokha originally made for a man called Tuthmosis, chief steward of Amun and overseer of the granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt during the reign of Ramesses II, which was subsequently taken over by Soter and his relations.[594]

The burial equipment of the members of this family comprises coffins, shrouds, papyri, and other small objects like wreaths and jewellry. The papyri include copies of short hieratic texts for the afterlife like those mentioned in sections 7.4.5.2 and 7.4.71, including the First and Second Letters for Breathing.[595] Some of the coffins are inscribed with brief hieroglyphic and demotic religious formulas as well. These refer to their owners as 'Osiris of NN' or 'Hathor of NN', depending on their gender.[596] The

[590] W. Needler, *An Egyptian Funerary Bed of the Roman Period in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto, 1963).

[591] For Roman Period burials on the west bank, see N. Strudwick, 'Some Aspects of the Archaeology of the Theban Necropolis in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods', in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, pp. 167–88; C. Riggs, 'The Egyptian Funerary Tradition at Thebes in the Roman Period', ibid., pp. 189–201.

[592] Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, pp. 42–3.

[593] See Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts*, pp. 5–10; F.-R. Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter: Histoire d'une famille dans l'Égypte romaine* (Paris, 2002); van Landuyt in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 69–82; Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 182–205 and 278–84; Riggs in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, pp. 193–5; C. Riggs, 'Archaism and Artistic Sources in Roman Egypt: The Coffins of the Soter Family and the Temple of Deir el-Medina', *BIFAO* 106 (2006), pp. 315–32; B. Hellinckx, 'Studying the Funerary Art of Roman Egypt', *CdE* 85 (2010), pp. 146–9; J. Karig, 'Das Grab des Soter: Zur Geschichte eines Fundkomplexes', in A. Spiekermann (ed.), *'Zur Zierde gereicht . . .': Festschrift Bettina Schmitz zum 60. Geburtstag am 24. Juli 2008* (Hildesheim, 2008), pp. 141–52.

[594] *PM* I², pp. 49–50; L. Kákosy, 'The Soter Tomb in Thebes', in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 61–7; Karig in Spiekermann (ed.), *'Zur Zierde gereicht . . .'*, pp. 147–9.

[595] For lists of these, see Hellinckx, *CdE* 85 (2010), pp. 148–9; Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts*, pp. 5–6. Several are illustrated in Herbin, *Padiimenipet fils de Sôter*, pp. 10–11, 14, 18, and 45.

[596] See, for instance, van Landuyt in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 74 and 78.

coffins and the shrouds are richly decorated with scenes depicting various aspects of the afterlife, for example, the judgement of the dead before Osiris, as well as other deities like Anubis, Thoth, Isis, and Nephthys. On some of the shrouds, the deceased is portrayed with the attributes and iconography of Osiris.[597]

We have already seen that inscriptions on the coffins of two of Soter's children inform us that they died in AD 109 and 116 respectively. Three other coffins belonging to this group supply us with precise dates for their owners' deaths as well. A second Petamenophis, one generation younger than the first one, died on 27 August AD 123.[598] Two women who belonged to the same generation as him, Tphous and Sapaulis, died on 15 January 127 and 11 March 146 respectively.[599] These dates provide a chronological framework for the entire Soter group extending roughly from the beginning to the end of the first half of the second century AD. It should be noted that material of similar design and workmanship has been discovered in other Theban tombs as well, probably products of the same craftsmen or workshops as those made for Soter and his family.[600]

7.4.7.3. The Pebos group

Another interesting multiple interment is the Pebos group. This was discovered in the basement of an abandoned house at Deir el-Medina which had been reused as a tomb.[601] The house in question, designated as C3 or Tomb 1407 by its excavator, held five vaulted coffins, one reused coffin of the Third Intermediate Period, and two mummies without coffins. Greek inscriptions on five of the coffins provided the names, filiation, and age at death of their occupants, but there were no texts for the afterlife or other religious formulas. Six of the mummies found in the house had masks made of cartonnage, which had been painted and gilded. These were decorated with motifs relating to the afterlife, including guardian deities of the underworld, Anubis attending to a mummy on a lion bier with female figures assisting at the two ends, and Osiris being adored by Horus and Anubis.

It is not clear how many generations are represented by the Pebos group. Nor can we be certain how many of those whose mummies and coffins were found together are actually related to one another. At least one of them, possibly two, was a priest in the cult of Sarapis. The earliest of the Greek inscriptions on the coffins can be assigned to

[597] For examples of this mode of depicting the deceased from earlier periods of Egyptian history, see sections 4.9.1 and 4.14.4.

[598] Herbin, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts*, p. 8.

[599] Ibid., pp. 8–9.

[600] Hellinckx, *CdE* 85 (2010), pp. 149–52; C. Riggs and M. Depauw, '"Soternalia" from Deir el-Bahri, Including Two Coffin Lids with Demotic Inscriptions', *RdE* 53 (2002), pp. 75–102.

[601] B. Bruyère and A. Bataille, 'Une tombe gréco-romaine de Deir el Médineh', *BIFAO* 36 (1936–7), pp. 145–74 and plates 1–9; B. Bruyère and A. Bataille, 'Une tombe gréco-romaine de Deir el Médineh (*suite*)', *BIFAO* 38 (1939), pp. 73–107 with plates 7–9; D. Montserrat and L. Meskell, 'Mortuary Archaeology and Religious Landscape at Graeco-Roman Deir el-Medina', *JEA* 83 (1997), pp. 187–93; Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 205–17 and 291–3; Riggs in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, pp. 190 and 195–8; Hellinckx, *CdE* 85 (2010), pp. 152–3.

the second half of the second century AD on the basis of their palaeography, the latest to the very beginning of the third century.[602] Thus the house appears to have been used for burials over an extended period of time. The inscriptions on one coffin state that its two occupants were buried on the last day of the month of Hathor in year 17 of an unnamed ruler, probably either Marcus Aurelius or Septimius Severus. If it is the former, then the date corresponds to 1 December AD 176; if it is the latter, then the date is 1 December AD 208.

7.4.7.4. Deir el-Bahri mummy masks

More than twenty plaster and linen mummy masks were discovered in pit burials at Deir el-Bahri.[603] In some of these, coffins salvaged from earlier tombs had been used to line the pit or cover the mummies.[604] The masks themselves are uninscribed, and no texts were found in the burials, apart from a single Greek mummy label. This simply records the name and place of origin of the person for whom it was written. The decoration on these masks is less elaborate than that of those belonging to the Pebos group. They depict the deceased frontally in naturalistic poses. Below most of these portraits is a panel showing the *henu*-bark of Sokar flanked by jackals with keys to the underworld or other religious symbols. The burials from which the masks originate have been dated to the middle or late third century, chiefly on the basis of the clothing, jewellry, and hairstyles of those portrayed on them, which are not always reliable indicators. The preference shown for the bark of Sokar as a decorative motif on the majority of the masks is curious, since as far as one can judge, that god had already ceased to play a significant role in the festival of which he was originally the chief focus as early as the second century.[605]

7.4.7.5. The cemetery at Medinet Habu

Another cemetery was discovered above and to the west of the remains of the mortuary temple of Ay and Horemheb adjacent to Medinet Habu.[606] This consisted of about 200 domed brick tombs and a further 150 burials in depressions in the ground. Some of the latter inhumations were in pottery coffins, others in reused wooden coffins. The

[602] See the detailed discussion of the palaeographical features of these inscriptions in Montserrat and Meskell, *JEA* 83 (1997), p. 190. Contrast Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, p. 291, who simply attributes them all to the second half of the second century. For further criticisms of the shortcomings of the latter's treatment of the Greek inscriptions, see Dijkstra's review of Riggs's book in *BASP* 44 (2007), pp. 275–6.

[603] Strudwick in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, p. 174; Riggs, ibid., pp. 198–9; C. Riggs, 'Roman Period Mummy Masks from Deir el-Bahri', *JEA* 86 (2000), pp. 121–44; Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 232–43 and 295–301; Hellinckx, *CdE* 85 (2010), pp. 154–5.

[604] Riggs and Depauw, *RdE* 53 (2002), pp. 75–102.

[605] See section 7.4.10.3.

[606] U. Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu 5: Post-Ramesside Remains* (Chicago, 1954), pp. 42–4 and plates 27–8; Strudwick in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, p. 178.

excavator of this cemetery dated the domed tombs to the third century AD, the other burials to the third or the fourth century. According to him, the outer wrappings of several mummies were 'painted with representations of Egyptian mortuary gods, for example, Anubis', but he does not specify to which century these belonged.[607] Some had mummy masks, which bear a strong resemblance to those discovered at Deir el-Bahri.[608]

The same cemetery yielded 61 mummy labels inscribed in Greek.[609] Only one bears a precise date. It was inscribed on 3 April AD 277.[610] The rest of the labels have been assigned to the third or the fourth century, chiefly on the basis of palaeography. Three mention an indiction year, which implies a date in the fourth century. The labels give the names of the deceased and, in some cases, those of their parents. A number of them mention the owner's age at death. None have any religious formulae. However, one has a drawing of two jackals with keys to the underworld on the reverse, which is clear evidence of belief in the traditional Egyptian afterlife.[611] Unfortunately, it is not clear whether this particular label should be assigned to the third or fourth century.

7.4.7.6. Miscellaneous shrouds and mummy masks

The preceding survey does not exhaust the Roman Period funerary material found at Thebes. There are other objects that we have not taken into consideration, all of which have been dated in rather vague terms to the late second or early third century AD.[612] One shroud from Tomb 1447 at Deir el Medina, for instance, depicts Osiris, Anubis, Isis, Nephthys, and other deities. Its hieroglyphic inscriptions invoke Osiris foremost in the west and refer to its owner with the locution 'Osiris of NN'.[613] Other shrouds and masks from the same tomb depict Osiris, the weighing of the heart, and the four sons of Horus.[614] Two further shrouds, including one from Tomb 1447, display small images of Osiris and Anubis on either side of the deceased's head.[615] The decoration of another shroud incorporates three registers of scenes showing Anubis tending to a mummy, Osiris flanked by Horus, Anubis, and Isis, and the *henu*-bark of Sokar with jackals holding keys to the underworld on either side of it.[616] The last scene is paralleled on the mummy masks found at Deir el-Bahri discussed in section 7.4.7.4. But objects like these do not really alter the picture that emerges from the evidence we have looked at so far.

[607] Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu 5*, p. 44.
[608] Ibid., pp. 43–4 and plate 28A; Riggs in Strudwick and Taylor (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, p. 191.
[609] T. Wilfong, 'Mummy Labels from the Oriental Institute's Excavations at Medinet Habu', *BASP* 32 (1995), pp. 157–81 and plates 11–18.
[610] Ibid., p. 161. [611] Ibid., p. 163 and plate 11.
[612] See Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 222–32; Hellinckx, *CdE* 85 (2010), pp. 153–4.
[613] B. Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (années 1948 à 1951)* (Cairo, 1953), pp. 108–10 and plate 23; Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 224–5. The latter wrongly states (ibid., p. 224 note 86) that the initial element of this locution normally follows titles. In fact the exact opposite is true.
[614] Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (années 1948 à 1951)*, pp. 107–8 and plates 24–5.
[615] Ibid., p. 108 with plates 23 and 25; Riggs, *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt*, pp. 225–7.
[616] Ibid., pp. 229–31.

7.4.7.7. Summary of the latest evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife at Thebes

The picture that emerges from this evidence can be summarized as follows. Belief in the Osirian afterlife still flourishes at Thebes during the first century AD. This is amply demonstrated by the burial equipment deposited in tombs there and its decoration. Texts for the afterlife, including some of considerable length and complexity, continue to be composed and transmitted in both hieratic and demotic. In the first half of the second century, all this is still broadly true. One important difference is that lengthy texts for the afterlife cease to be produced, with the possible exception of the Embalming Ritual of P. Boulaq 3. However, even if this was used for the final time during the mummification of an individual who died in AD 125, as some think it was, the manuscript itself may have been written considerably earlier. Shorter texts for the afterlife continue to be produced, but these tend to be more formulaic and are not as diverse as in earlier periods. Nevertheless, assemblages of burial equipment like the Soter group attest to the persistence of traditional conceptions of Osiris as the god of the dead among those buried in the Theban necropolis.

In the second half of the second century AD, things start to change. The evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife begins to decline. It does not disappear altogether. There are still important burial assemblages attesting to such belief that can be assigned to this period, for example, the Pebos group from Deir el-Medina. Moreover, brief texts for the afterlife remain in use, but there are fewer of these than before. The last precisely datable Theban text to refer explicitly to Osiris and his relationship with the deceased is that inscribed on Florence Coffin 2165 in AD 194. It would appear, therefore, that the second half of the second century was a pivotal one for belief in the Osirian afterlife at Thebes. Evidence for such belief is reasonably abundant at the beginning of that period, but has virtually disappeared by the end of it.

From the third century AD onward, our evidence for conceptions of the afterlife at Thebes is purely representational. Texts no longer record the posthumous aspirations of those who were buried in the Theban necropolis. Osiris still features in the decoration of some of the latest mummy masks of the Pebos group, but none of these post-dates the first decade of the third century. Some years later, the Deir el-Bahri mummy masks still employ traditional Egyptian symbols like jackals with keys to the underworld and the *henu*-bark of Sokar in their decorative panels, but Osiris himself is conspicuous by his absence from these. Representations of that god do figure in the decorative schemes of some other Theban shrouds and masks, but as we have seen, the attribution of these to the third century is uncertain. They may date to the latter part of the second century instead. With the exception of the Pebos masks mentioned above, there is no written reference to or representation of Osiris on any item of burial equipment from Thebes that can be securely dated later than the end of the second century.

Our evidence for conceptions of the afterlife grows even sparser after the third century AD. The excavator of the cemetery adjacent to the temple of Medinet Habu spanning the third and fourth centuries reported that the wrappings of some mummies

found there were decorated with representations of Egyptian funerary gods. Unfortunately he does not say whether these included Osiris or not. Nor does he specify to which century the mummies in question belonged, the third or the fourth. One of the mummy labels discovered in this cemetery has a drawing of two jackals with keys to the underworld on the reverse, but the editor of this and the other mummy labels from the site does not assign it to a specific century.

It is worth noting at this point that neither mummification nor the use of a mummy label to identify a body is sufficient evidence in itself to prove an individual's adherence to traditional Egyptian religious beliefs. The practice of mummifying the bodies of the deceased persisted into the Christian Period,[617] and mummy labels continued to be employed for purposes of identification by Christians as well.[618] Since the Medinet Habu cemetery remained in use for burials even after Christianity had become the dominant religion in Egypt,[619] ascertaining the religious affiliation of those who were interred there is not always a straightforward matter.

What we can say with certainty is that direct evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife at Thebes ceases after the first decade of the third century AD. From the subsequent decades of that century, we only have indirect evidence for it, specifically, the occurrence of religious symbols with strong Osirian associations on items of burial equipment that do not actually depict or mention Osiris himself. One may or may not accept this indirect evidence as proof that belief in Osiris as god of the dead actually persisted at Thebes after the initial decade of the third century AD. But even if it did, this was probably only in an attenuated form, and there is no securely datable evidence of any sort for its survival there as late as the fourth century.

7.4.8. The latest references to Osiris in Theban temple inscriptions

As noted in the preceding section, the latter part of the second century appears to have been a watershed in the history of Osirian belief at Thebes, the period that witnessed its sharpest decline. This conclusion is borne out by the evidence of the inscriptions in contemporary Theban temples. In the reign of Antoninus Pius (AD 138–61), the portico before the small temple at Medinet Habu was expanded with the addition of columns and a large forecourt. Hymns and other texts were inscribed on the entrance of the portico and the west and south portals of the forecourt.[620] One of these texts refers to the god Montu-Re-Harakhti performing rites for Osiris in order to rejuvenate him.[621] Another invokes the latter god as the one who brings forth the flood and the

[617] See G. Fischhaber, *Mumifizierung im koptischen Ägypten: Eine Untersuchung zur Körperlichkeit im 1. Jahrtausend n. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 1997); I. Uytterhoeven, *Hawara in the Graeco-Roman Period: Life and Death in a Fayum Village* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2009), p. 484 note 122, and references cited there.

[618] Cf. a mummy label from Thebes which was written for a certain Papnoute the son of Apa Jeremias, published in Schmidt, *ZÄS* 32 (1894), p. 62.

[619] Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu 5*, pp. 43–4.

[620] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 339–63.

[621] Ibid., pp. 348–50.

creator of grain.[622] In the reign of the same king a small temple was built in the Valley of the Queens. This was subsequently converted into a Coptic monastery, hence its modern name Deir el-Rumi. The decoration of this monument features a number of divinities, including Osiris, Amenopet of Djeme, Isis, Harsiesis, and the Ogdoad.[623] But thereafter, Osiris disappears from the monumental record at Thebes. There is no trace of him in any temple scene or inscription there later than the reign of Antoninus Pius.

7.4.9. Osiris in Theban magical texts

One type of evidence which we have not considered so far is that provided by magical texts from Thebes. There are four important demotic collections of magical spells: the London-Leiden Magical Payrus, P. Leiden I 384 verso, P. Louvre E 3229, and P. BM EA 10588. A Theban provenience is generally accepted for the first two of these. The Leiden portion of the first was purchased in Luxor and the hand of this manuscript and that of P. Leiden I 384 are so much alike that most acknowledge them to be products of the same scribal workshop, if not actually of the same scribe.[624] Moreover, there is reason to think that the two were rolled up together in antiquity.[625] We have less explicit evidence that the other manuscripts come from Thebes, but a Theban origin is generally assumed for them because of their similarity to the first two.[626]

The London-Leiden Magical Papyrus is usually thought to have been written in the third century AD, but as Dieleman has noted, a date in the late second century cannot be ruled out.[627] In a forthcoming article, Quack proposes to date this manuscript and P. Leiden I 384 verso to the end of the second century or the beginning of the third century.[628] P. Louvre E 3229 and P. BM EA 10588 are normally assigned to the third century as well,[629] although Quack prefers a date in the late second century or early third century for the former. If his proposed dates for the first three manuscripts are correct, then the British Museum papyrus should probably be re-dated to the same timespan as them, since all four texts are more or less contemporary with each other.

In addition to these demotic papyri, there is a substantial corpus of magical texts written in Greek, with occasional passages in Old Coptic. The individual texts in this corpus are usually referred to with the designation PGM (Papyri Graecae Magicae), followed by an upper case Roman numeral. There is, in fact, some overlap between this group and the demotic manuscripts described above, since all of the latter except for P. Louvre E 3229 contain passages of varying lengths in Greek as well, a feature which qualifies them for inclusion in the PGM corpus. Thus the Greek section of the

[622] Ibid., pp. 355–6. [623] Ibid., pp. 363–4.
[624] Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites*, pp. 27–8 and 40–1. [625] Ibid., p. 27.
[626] Ibid., p. 15. [627] Ibid., pp. 41–4. [628] Reference courtesy of Edward Love.
[629] See e.g. the Trismegistos website; Betz (ed.), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, pp. xxv, xxviii, and lvii.

London-Leiden Magical Papyrus is PGM XIV, that of P. Leiden I 384 verso is PGM XII, and that of P. BM EA 10588 is PGM LXI.[630]

Of the 130 texts that have received a PGM designation of this sort, 23 contain references to Osiris. Only a small number of these can be assigned a Theban origin with any confidence, however. Apart from PGM XII and PGM XIV, the evidence for whose provenience we have already discussed in the opening paragraph of this section, the manuscripts in question are PGM IV, PGM V, and PGM XIII.[631] The first has been dated to the third or the fourth century AD on the basis of palaeography, the other two have been assigned to the fourth century. According to Dieleman, four further Greek manuscripts, PGM I, PGM II, PGM III, and PGM VII, may come from Thebes as well, but this is less certain.[632] The Trismegistos website accepts a Theban provenience for the first and third of these, but not for the second, while suggesting that the fourth may originate from the Fayum.[633] PGM I has been dated to the fourth or fifth century AD, PGM II and PGM III to the fourth century, and PGM VII to the third or the fourth century. Here we will restrict ourselves to a consideration of the evidence provided by those magical texts for which a Theban origin seems reasonably certain. In these texts, Osiris figures in the following contexts and roles.[634]

(1) He is mentioned in lists of magical names, whether of Egyptian or non-Egyptian origin. In some of these, the name of Osiris occurs on its own.[635] In others, it is combined with epithets, e.g. *Oserkhenthementhei*, a Greek transcription of *Wsir ḫnty ʾImnt*, 'Osiris foremost in the west'.[636] The god's name is also used in various syncretistic combinations in lists of this sort, for instance, *Phrē-ousiri* and *Aniōb-ousiri*, 'Pre-Osiris' and 'Anubis-Osiris' respectively.[637] Finally, it can be combined with what appear to be non-Egyptian elements, e.g. *Rabkousiri*, *Mnēkousiri*, and *Phlēkousiri*.[638]

(2) Osiris is mentioned obliquely in relation to another deity or being who is the main focus of attention. In one spell, the magician invokes a divinity called Harkentekhtha who is 'beside the lord Osiris'.[639] Earlier in the same spell, he directs the anger of the moon goddess against someone whom he declares to be the enemy of Helios Osiris.[640] Elsewhere, he identifies himself as Horus the son

[630] Ibid., pp. xxiii–v.
[631] Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites*, p. 14.
[632] Ibid., pp. 14–15.
[633] For the view that PGM VII comes from the Fayum, see also M. de Haro Sanchez, 'Les papyrus iatromagiques grecs et la region thébaine', in Delattre and Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, p. 102.
[634] If one were to include the evidence from texts for which a Theban provenience is less certain, the number of examples in the different categories that follow would increase but not the number of categories itself.
[635] See e.g. PGM IV, line 868 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 102).
[636] PGM XIII, lines 815–16 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 2, p. 124).
[637] PGM IV, lines 890 and 893 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 102).
[638] PGM IV, lines 891–3 (ibid., p. 102).
[639] PGM IV, lines 2355–6 (ibid., p. 146).
[640] PGM IV, lines 2342–3 (ibid., p. 144).

of Osiris Osoronnophris.[641] In another spell, he calls himself one of the two falcons who watch over Isis and Osiris.[642]

(3) Reference is made to Osiris in the instructions for performing a particular magical operation. In one spell, the practitioner is told to draw a picture of the god clothed in Egyptian fashion on a piece of papyrus.[643] In another, the magician is told to wrap a figure made of wax like Osiris.[644] In a third spell, he is told to seal the mouth of a skull that he uses in the course of his work with dirt from the doors of Osiris.[645]

(4) A mythical incident or situation involving Osiris is cited as a precedent for the outcome that the magician seeks to bring about. In a spell designed to arouse discord between two people, for example, a god is asked to induce the same sort of hostility between them that existed between Typhon and Osiris.[646] In spells intended to attract a woman to a man, on the other hand, reference is made to the passion that Osiris and Isis felt for each other or, in some cases, that god's passion for his sister Nephthys.[647]

(5) The authority of Osiris is invoked as a means of compelling recalcitrant spirits and deities to obey the magician. In one spell, a chthonic daimon is told to perform a certain task because the holy god Osiris wishes and commands him to do so.[648] In another, the magician adjures Hermes to come to him by the names of his father Osiris and mother Isis.[649]

(6) The magician makes threats against Osiris to ensure that his will is obeyed. In a spell designed to deal with a quarrelsome superior, the recitant says that he is carrying the mummy of the god to Abydos to bury it. But if his opponent makes trouble for him, he asserts, he will throw the mummy at him. This spell is of particular interest since it exists in both demotic and Greek versions.[650] The idea

[641] PGM IV, lines 1077–8 (ibid., p. 108). Osoronnophris is a Greek transcription of *Wsir Wn-nfr*, 'Osiris Wennefer'. The magician also identifies himself as Horus the son of Osiris in London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 2/8 and 18/16 (Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plates 2 and 18).

[642] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 9/34 (ibid., plate 9). Cf. London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 6/24 (ibid., plate 6); also texts cited in section 7.3.11.1.

[643] PGM IV, lines 2124–5 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 136).

[644] PGM IV, lines 3137–8 (ibid., p. 174).

[645] PGM IV, lines 2128–9 (ibid., pp. 136 and 138).

[646] PGM XII, lines 372–3 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 2, p. 82). Typhon here is equivalent to Seth. For a reference to the latter's hostility to Osiris, see London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 19/36–7 (Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plate 19).

[647] See e.g. London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 15/14–17 (ibid., plate 15); PGM IV, lines 94–153 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, pp. 70–6).

[648] PGM IV, lines 2092–4 (ibid., p. 136).

[649] PGM XII, lines 148–9 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 2, p. 68).

[650] PGM XIV, lines 11–15 (ibid., p. 132); London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 15/28–31 (Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plate 15). As noted in section 7.3.10, this is one of a number of spells in Theban magical papyri where allusion is made to the burial of Osiris at Abydos. Interest in the Abydene cult of that god at Thebes is already evident in sources of the Middle Kingdom, as witnessed by examples of the Abydos Formula inscribed on Theban stelae (section 4.9.2). For

that the magician has power over Osiris is further illustrated by a spell in which he claims to be a gryphon holding Osiris in his hand.[651]

(7) A substance or object that the magician employs in his operation is identified with an aspect or part of Osiris. In an invocation recited over a particular herb, for instance, the recitant calls it the zeal of Osiris and the soul of that god's daimon.[652] In another invocation to a wick used in a lamp, the magician asks if it is the byssus garment and the bandage of Osiris.[653] Elsewhere, wine is identified as the blood of that god,[654] and a scarab beetle as his little finger.[655]

(8) The magician identifies himself with Osiris for ritual purposes. In one spell, he says 'I am Osiris, called water. I am Isis, called dew.'[656] In another, he identifies himself successively with Isis, Osiris, and Anubis.[657]

(9) Information is sought from Osiris through the medium of an intercessor. The instructions in one spell say that when the magician has found Osiris on his boat of papyrus and faience with Isis at his head and Nephthys at his feet, he should ask Isis to obtain the information he is seeking from her brother.[658]

(10) Osiris is invoked directly by the magician. In one spell, for instance, he says 'I summon you, headless one, who created earth and heaven, who created night and day, who created light and darkness. You are Osoronnophris whom none has ever seen.' Later on in the same spell he identifies himself as the messenger of Pharaoh Osoronnophris.[659] Another invocation begins with the words 'Hail Osiris, king of the underworld'. This is attested in both Old Coptic and demotic versions.[660]

The demotic magical texts from Thebes, and a few of the Greek ones as well, overlap chronologically with the latest secure evidence we have found for belief in the Osirian afterlife there. They were written and employed at the same time that people were being buried wearing mummy masks decorated with images of Osiris. Did those who wrote

manifestations of this interest in later periods of Egyptian history, see L. Coulon and A. Masson, 'Osiris Naref à Karnak', in Coulon (ed.), *Le culte d'Osiris au Ier millénaire av. J.-C. Découvertes et travaux récents*, p. 137; Coulon in Zivie-Coche and Guermeur (eds), '*Parcourir l'éternité*' 1, pp. 383–4; Kucharek in Maram, Juwig, Schwengel, and Thaler (eds), *Constructing Power—Architecture, Ideology and Social Practice*, pp. 122–3; Traunecker *apud* Gasse, Albert, Einaudi, Régen, and Traunecker, *ENiM* 8 (2015), pp. 62–6.

[651] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 19/27 (Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plate 19).

[652] PGM IV, lines 2985–8 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 168).

[653] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 6/12–13 (Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plate 6).

[654] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 15/13–14 (ibid., plate 15).

[655] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 21/25–6 and 33 (ibid., plate 21).

[656] PGM XII, line 234 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 2, p. 74).

[657] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 9/17 (Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plate 9).

[658] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 6/31–3 (ibid., plate 6).

[659] PGM V, lines 98–102 and 113–14 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 184).

[660] PGM IV, lines 10–25 (ibid., p. 66); London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 21/1–9 (Griffith and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plate 21).

and used these magical texts have the same aspirations for the hereafter as the owners of the masks? Although a few of the spells refer to Osiris as king of the underworld,[661] they make no further reference to his role as god of the dead, or to his relationship with the deceased. That is probably to be expected, however, since magical texts, by their very nature, are concerned with the here and now rather than the hereafter.

Another striking feature of these texts is that they seem to envisage little direct interaction between Osiris and those who employed them. In some spells he is purely a background figure; in others he is no more or less important than a range of other deities in whose company he appears. He is one of many supernatural beings whose names can be invoked or to whom allusion can be made during the recitation of a spell as a catalyst to trigger a particular result. To be sure, this qualifies as a form of belief. But is the belief system involved still the same as in the other sources that we have examined? On the one hand, the writers and users of these texts display some awareness of the most salient features of Osiris's mythology and iconography. This suggests that they should be seen as part of the same tradition as those other sources. On the other hand, the divine world envisaged in the magical spells is different in key respects to the one that we know from other Egyptian texts. Not only does Osiris co-exist in it with Greek deities like Zeus, Hera, Hermes, Ares, and Athena,[662] he collaborates with the archangel Michael in doing the magician's will,[663] and is hailed as the god who revealed his mysteries to Israel through Moses and the other prophets.[664] By contrast, the distinctively Theban characteristics of Osiris that we have identified in earlier sections of this chapter are hardly in evidence. One sees here a belief system that looks outward, not inward, and not just to the Greek religion that existed alongside traditional Egyptian religion for centuries, but to other religions like Judaism as well.

Although the Theban magical texts are often said to have been written and used by priests based in temples,[665] they provide little evidence for any temple of Osiris as a functioning entity. In one spell against dog bite, the magician threatens that if the biter does not remove his venom and saliva, he will take it to the dromos or forecourt of Osiris.[666] In another spell, the magician is instructed to seal the mouth of a skull with dirt from the doors of Osiris, which some have conjectured to mean the doors of a temple of Osiris.[667] But a reference to a temple in a text does not constitute evidence that the temple in question was still functioning at the time that text was written.[668] It is often assumed that the existence of magical texts presupposes that of functioning

[661] See, for example, those cited in the preceding footnote.

[662] Cf. the list of deities mentioned in PGM IV, lines 2977–3001 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, p. 168).

[663] PGM IV, lines 2355–7 (ibid., p. 146).

[664] PGM V, lines 108–17 (ibid., p. 184).

[665] See, for instance, Dieleman, *Priests, Tongues, and Rites*, p. 22.

[666] London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 19/5–6 (Griffth and Thompson, *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leiden* 2, plate 19).

[667] PGM IV, lines 2128–9 (Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 1, pp. 136 and 138–9).

[668] See discussion of this point in sections 7.1.4 and 7.1.6.

temples, on the grounds that the temple milieu is the only one in which they could have originated. But this is circular reasoning. As we will see in section 7.4.10.1, there is only a limited amount of evidence, chiefly in the form of economic documents written on ostraca, that any temples at Thebes were still active at the time when even the earliest of the Theban magical texts were written.

It is not inconceivable, of course, that some of the spells in these texts were originally composed by priests employed in temples and used subsequently by others in non-temple contexts. This raises the question of the age of the magical spells, as opposed to the manuscripts in which they are preserved. Although we can assign dates to individual manuscripts with a fair degree of accuracy, it is harder to determine when the constituent spells of a given manuscript were actually composed. The fact that versions of the same spell are attested in manuscripts of widely different dates indicates that there could have been a fairly lengthy process of redaction and transmission, and that therefore the contents of a spell may not reflect religious practices that were current at the latest date when it was still in use.[669]

To recapitulate, direct evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife at Thebes ceases after the first decade of the third century AD. There is indirect evidence that such belief may have persisted into subsequent decades of that century, but whether or not one accepts this is a matter of individual judgement. Theban magical texts certainly attest that a form of belief in Osiris, although not apparently in the Osirian afterlife as such, survived there as late as the fourth century AD. However, the precise nature of this belief and its relationship to the sort of Osirian beliefs we have investigated elsewhere in this book has still to be determined.

Belief can be defined in two different ways. At the most basic level, it means acceptance that a proposition is true. One believes that there are insect-eating mammals called aardvarks that live in Africa, or that the Triassic Period preceded the Jurassic. But the term is also used in an extended sense to mean acceptance that a proposition is true and adoption of a particular mode of behaviour as a consequence. Those who believe that education is important make an effort to send their children to good schools. Those who believe in the values espoused by a particular political party may not only vote for it but campaign or do other work on its behalf during elections. In the context of religion, the word is normally used with this second more extended sense. One believes that a supernatural being exists and is motivated to behave in certain ways as a result. These might include worship of the being in question, adherence to a particular moral code which it is thought that being will approve, or both. But there are numerous other possible responses as well, ranging from indifference or disregard to attempts to compel the being to obey one's commands.[670]

[669] See, for example, the invocation to Osiris preserved in London-Leiden Magical Papyrus, 21/1–9 (late second century or early third century AD), and PGM IV, lines 10–25 (third or fourth century AD).

[670] For the former, cf. cases where an individual acknowledges the existence of many deities, but reserves his devotion exclusively for one. This sort of attitude is more common in the Graeco-Roman Period than it is in earlier ones. See Jasnow and Smith, *Enchoria* 32 (2010/11), p. 34. For attempts to compel obedience from deities, see examples cited from Theban magical texts in section 7.4.9.

One way of characterizing the difference between magical texts from Thebes on the one hand, and texts for the afterlife and decorated mummy masks from Theban tombs on the other, is to say that while both attest to belief in Osiris, they evince two very distinct patterns of behaviour that were adopted by their users as a consequence of that belief. This is not to deny the possibility that those who employed the Theban magical texts were devout followers of Osiris as well, and looked forward to spending eternity in his presence as much as those who were buried with mummy masks adorned with images of the god. But the magical texts do not provide any evidence that this was the case.

7.4.10. When did traditional Egyptian religion come to an end at Thebes?

7.4.10.1. Evidence from graffiti, ostraca, and other minor objects

When did traditional Egyptian as a whole come to an end at Thebes? Temple construction and decoration in the traditional mode stop after the reign of Antoninus Pius (AD 138–61).[671] Two fragmentary stelae inscribed in Greek from the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–80) were discovered to the north of the Opet temple at Karnak, but these provide no evidence for the continuation of any native Egyptian cult there.[672] A statue base, also from Karnak, inscribed with Greek and demotic texts is dated in 21 Hathor of year 21 of Commodus (= 17 November AD 180).[673] The demotic text on this object mentions various priestly titles, including that of overseer of god's servants. The dedicator's father is identified as a god's father and chief priest of Amun-Re king of the gods. This is the latest reference to the chief priest of an indigenous Egyptian cult that has been found anywhere in the country.

Jan Quaegebeur has drawn attention to a pair of Greek ostraca which make reference to other priests attached to the cult of Amun at Karnak. One mentions an archipastophore and was inscribed on 2 June AD 171. The other, which mentions some pastophores, was written on 2 July 198.[674] Two Greek graffiti from Deir el-Shelwit record the appointment of a man with the Egyptian name Pamontekysis to the priestly office of stolist, although they do not inform us in which god's cult he was employed. One was written on 15 June AD 200 during the joint reign of Septimius Severus and

[671] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 337–64. The cartouches that accompany an offering scene in the small temple of Medinet Habu, which some have erroneously identified as those of an emperor of the mid-third century, are probably those of Hadrian (AD 117–38). See ibid., pp. 335–7.

[672] Ibid., p. 367.

[673] Ibid., pp. 368–9; Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes and Other Short Texts in the Demotic Script Found on Various Objects and Gathered from Many Publications*, pp. 211–12.

[674] J. Quaegebeur, 'Les appellations grecques des temples de Karnak', *OLP* 6/7 (1975/6), p. 465; J. Quaegebeur, 'Prêtres et cultes thébaines à la lumière de documents égyptiens et grecs', *BSFE* 70–1 (1974), pp. 44 and 55 note 24. For the ostraca in question, see J. Tait and C. Préaux, *Greek Ostraca in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* 2 (London, 1955), pp. 226 (no. 1480) and 245 (no. 1569).

Caracalla. The date of the other is difficult to decipher, but since both graffiti appear to commemorate the same event, it is probably contemporary with the first.[675]

A number of other Greek and demotic ostraca inform us about the economic activities of various Theban priests during the second and third centuries AD, including the leasing of months and days of priestly service.[676] Unfortunately, these rarely specify the cults in which the priests were employed. A few are associated with Isis.[677] Some of the latest precisely dated ostraca concern the affairs of a god's father called Khabonkhonsis son of Horos. One demotic ostracon in which he figures was written on the first day of Mesore in the eleventh year of the joint reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla (= 25 July AD 203). Another was written in the twelfth year of that reign but the day and month are not preserved.[678] A Greek ostracon records the amounts of interest owed by or to Khabonkhonsis for a period ending on 18 Mesore in year 13 of the same reign (= 11 August 205). In this text he is called stolist of the temple of Apollo and Asklepios the great gods. Some think these Greek appellations may actually refer to the Egyptian gods Montu and Imhotep, but we cannot be certain that this is the case.[679]

Finally, a sandstone fragment which may once have formed part of an altar found at Deir el-Rumi is inscribed with a Greek dedication dated to 24 Hathor in regnal year three of Severus Alexander (= 20 November AD 223).[680] The dedicator, whose name is not preserved, was a sacred herald (ἱεροκῆρυξ) of Apollo. Although the title, which is more common elsewhere in the Mediterranean world than it is in Egypt,[681] certainly points to a Greek cult rather than an Egyptian one, it has been suggested that Apollo may stand for Montu here as well.[682] If so, then this is the latest securely dated text to provide evidence of a functioning Egyptian cult at Thebes.[683]

[675] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 371; P. Jouguet, 'Inscription de Deir-Chelouit', in S. Glanville (ed.), *Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith* (London, 1932), pp. 241–4; C. Zivie, M. Azim, P. Deleuze, and J.-C. Golvin, *Le temple de Deir Chelouit* 4 (Cairo, 1992), pp. 93–4 and plate 68; E. Lanciers, 'The Isis Cult in Western Thebes in the Graeco-Roman Period', *CdE* 90 (2015), p. 127.

[676] U. Kaplony-Heckel, 'Rund um die thebanischen Tempel (Demotische Ostraka zur Pfründen-Wirtschaft)', in Hoffmann and Thissen (eds), *Res Severa Verum Gaudium*, pp. 307–19; P. Heilporn, 'À la recherche du clergé thébain à l'époque romaine', in Delattre and Heilporn (eds) *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, pp. 125–36; P. Heilporn, *Thèbes et ses taxes: Recherches sur la fiscalité en Égypte romaine (Ostraca de Strasbourg II)* (Paris, 2009), pp. 147–50 and 259–322.

[677] S. Pfeiffer, 'Die religiöse Praxis im thebanischen Raum zwischen hoher Kaiserzeit und Spätantike', in Feder and Lohwasser (eds), *Ägypten und sein Umfeld in der Spätantike*, p. 68; Lanciers, *CdE* 90 (2015), pp. 129–31.

[678] Kaplony-Heckel in Hoffmann and Thissen (eds), *Res Severa Verum Gaudium*, pp. 316–18; Heilporn, *Thèbes et ses taxes*, pp. 320–2.

[679] Ibid., pp. 147–9 and 322–6; Heilporn in Delattre and Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, pp. 134–5; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 371–2. The last suggests that the priestly title attributed to Khabonkhonsis might relate to cults at Armant rather than Thebes, but this is unlikely given that individual's known associations with the latter city.

[680] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 372; G. Wagner and G. Lecuyot, 'Une dédicace d'un néocore, héraut sacré d'Apollon', *BIFAO* 93 (1993), pp. 413–18.

[681] Ibid., p. 416. [682] Ibid., p. 417; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 372.

[683] P. Lips. I 97, a Greek account writen sometime after 25 April in 338 AD, refers to a man called Plenis from the village of Isidion Horous who has the title ἱερεύς, 'priest'. See L. Mitteis, *Griechische Urkunden der*

7.4.10.2. The chapel for the Roman legion at Luxor temple

Some have claimed that Egyptian cults continued to function at Thebes even later than this, however. Klotz, for instance, believes that the cult of the god Amun at Luxor temple persisted into the reign of Diocletian (AD 284–305).[684] However, there is no evidence to support this view. As far as one can judge, no building or decoration took place at Luxor after the reign of Tiberius (AD 14–37).[685] References to Amenopet of Luxor in texts cease after the middle of the second century.[686] The latest recorded reference to the Opet Festival occurs in a hymn from the small temple at Medinet Habu dating to the reign of Antoninus Pius (138–61). This speaks of a deity repeating a river procession during the feast in question. Significantly, the god in question is said to be Nun, i.e. Montu-Re-Harakhti, and not Amun.[687] There is nothing to suggest that the cult of the latter god was still being performed at Luxor during the reigns of any subsequent emperors.

Under Diocletian, probably sometime near the beginning of the fourth century AD, the temple of Luxor was converted into a Roman military camp and its original enclosure wall fortified with towers and gates.[688] This was one of a number of fortresses established by him throughout the empire. The creation of a fortified military camp at Thebes was probably a response to the revolts and civil strife which disrupted Egypt in the waning years of the third century AD. The columned vestibule immediately to the south of the hypostyle hall at the end of the broad court built by Amenhotep III was transformed into a chapel for the Roman legion that now occupied the temple precinct.[689] At the rear of this, a niche-shaped shrine flanked by four large granite columns was inserted, blocking off access to the rooms behind it. This niche was decorated with paintings of the members of the Tetrarchy: the two reigning Augusti, Diocletian and Maximian, and their two Caesars, Constantius Chlorus and Galerius. The walls of the hall itself were decorated with frescoes depicting court officials, soldiers, and horses.[690]

Papyrussammlung zu Leipzig 1 (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 263 (11/20–1), 270 (21/1–2), 274 (25/23–4), 275 (28/3–4), and 279 (34/3–4). Unfortunately, the text does not tell us what kind of priest he was or what type of cult he served. Lanciers, *CdE* 90 (2015), pp. 123–8, locates Isidion Horous in the vicinity of Deir el-Shelwit. If he is correct, the text could provide evidence for the continuation of cultic activity on the west bank at Thebes as late as the fourth century AD. However, his proposed location for Isidion Horous is far from certain. P. Lips. I 97 actually originates from Armant, and it is possible that the village should be located there instead. For the persistence of traditional Egyptian religion at Armant into the first half of the fourth century AD, see sections 7.4.10.3 and 7.5.2.

[684] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 376–9 and 388.

[685] Ibid., pp. 258–69.

[686] See Smith, *Traversing Eternity*, p. 669, s.v. Amenopet; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 326 and 335.

[687] Ibid., pp. 357–8 and 386–7.

[688] See M. El-Saghir, J.-C. Golvin, M. Reddé, E. Hegazy, and G. Wagner, *Le camp romain de Louqsor* (Cairo, 1986); Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 374.

[689] For the location of this, see El-Saghir, Golvin, Reddé, Hegazy, and Wagner, *Le camp romain de Louqsor*, plate 1 (there marked 'chapelle aux enseignes'); *PM* II², p. 321 and plan 32 (there marked V).

[690] El-Saghir, Golvin, Reddé, Hegazy, and Wagner, *Le camp romain de Louqsor*, pp. 27–31 and plate 22; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 375.

It is generally accepted that cultic activity at Luxor temple had ceased long before it was converted for military purposes.[691] It would be difficult to conclude otherwise, given the gap of more than a century separating the latest evidence for such activity and the beginning of the reign of Diocletian. However, Klotz points to further structural alterations made to certain rooms in Luxor temple as an indication that traditional cultic activity persisted there even after its conversion. The rooms in question are the one enclosing the bark shrine in the rear part of the temple and the two chambers immediately to the east and northeast of it, one of which is decorated with scenes depicting the divine birth of Amenhotep III, the other showing the king censing and performing other rites before various deities.[692]

The north and south entrances of the room enclosing the bark shrine were blocked off, and a door in the northeast corner of that chamber was widened and topped with a brick arch. The outer walls of the two adjoining rooms to the east were removed and replaced with a row of brick columns.[693] According to Klotz, the purpose of these alterations was to provide an alternative access to the bark shrine from the east, since it was no longer accessible via the temple's main axis. He speculates that the bark of Amun may have left and entered the temple through this eastern doorway when it was carried in public processions. Thus he envisages a situation in which, even though the main part of the temple had been taken over for other purposes, Egyptian priests were still allowed access to a few rooms at the back which they could reach through an entrance created specifically for them.

In my view, there are four problems with this hypothesis. The first is that we do not know when the alterations to the room enclosing the bark shrine and the adjoining chambers of the Luxor temple were carried out.[694] There is no evidence that these changes were made in conjunction with or as a response to the conversion of the columned vestibule in front of them into a shrine honouring Diocletian and the other members of the Tetrarchy. They could have taken place either before or after that conversion. The second problem is that we do not know who carried out the alterations or why they did so. In theory, this may have been done for cultic purposes, but there are other possible explanations as well. There may have been a practical, non-religious motive for them, for example, the wish to create a secure magazine.[695]

[691] Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, p. 236; Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 126; Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, pp. 403–4; R. Bagnall, Review of M. El-Saghir, J.-C. Golvin, M. Reddé, E. Hegazy, and G. Wagner, *Le camp romain de Louqsor*, in *JEA* 76 (1990), p. 253; Pfeiffer in Feder and Lohwasser (eds), *Ägypten und sein Umfeld in der Spätantike*, pp. 62–3.

[692] See *PM* II², pp. 323–8 and plan 32 (there marked XI, XIII, and XIV respectively). The bark shrine itself is marked XII on that plan.

[693] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 268 and 377–8; W. Murnane, 'False Doors and Cult Practices Inside Luxor Temple', in P. Posener-Kriéger (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar* 2 (Cairo, 1985), pp. 135–48, especially pp. 145–7.

[694] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 268, dates them rather vaguely to 'sometime during the Roman Period', only noting that they could be as late as the reign of Diocletian as a possibility.

[695] Cf. Murnane in Posener-Kriéger (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar* 2, p. 146.

The third problem is that, once the temple of Luxor was incorporated within the perimeter of a fortified military camp, it is difficult to see how priests or others would have been able to gain access to it to perform the cult of the god. The bark shrine, and all the other parts of the temple, would have been off limits to them. The fourth problem is that it is one thing to postulate that a cult may have persisted until a certain date, and another thing to prove that it actually did, and Klotz has not been able to do this. As we have seen above, the evidence for cultic activity at Luxor temple comes to an end long before the start of Diocletian's reign. The simplest and most cogent explanation for this is that such activity had already ceased several decades before he came to the throne.[696]

This conclusion is borne out by an analysis of the Greek graffiti preserved on the walls of the temple of Luxor. There are approximately fifty of these. The majority are inscribed on the pylon and inside the court of Ramesses II immediately behind it. Only a few are to be found in the rear parts of the temple and then only on the outside walls.[697] Several of the graffiti record acts of worship (*proskynemata*).[698] In fourteen, the recipient of the writer's devotion is specified as the god Amun.[699] Only two of these are dated to a specific year. One (no. 15) was written on 17 March AD 126, the other (no. 36) in AD 39 or 40. The rest can be dated less precisely to the Ptolemaic or the Roman Period. But none of them is as late as the period of the temple's conversion into a Roman camp.

One further graffito (no. 37) expresses gratitude to Amun for an unspecified blessing. This was written on the south face of the entrance to the colonnaded hall.[700] The writer, a certain Ptollion, identifies himself as a doctor of the cohort (σπεῖρα). The editor suggests that this graffito could be contemporary with the establishment of the camp in the temple.[701] If so, then this would imply that it was still regarded as a site sacred to Amun at that time. However, Roman troops were stationed in Luxor as early as the second century AD.[702] Although these were not garrisoned in the temple, they did nevertheless visit it and left at least one record of their presence.[703] As Bagnall observes, it is far more likely that the cohort to which Ptollion was attached was part of this earlier detachment of soldiers.[704]

Klotz notes that Diocletian supported other Egyptian cults and, since he identified himself with Jupiter, with whom Amun was often equated, it is unlikely that he would

[696] Cf. Waitkus in Bárta and Küllmer (eds), *Diachronic Trends in Ancient Egyptian History*, p. 145, who offers additional reasons for rejecting Klotz's hypothesis.

[697] For the location of the graffiti, see El-Saghir, Golvin, Reddé, Hegazy, and Wagner, *Le camp romain de Louqsor*, plate 1.

[698] See G. Wagner, 'Inscriptions et graffites grecs du temple de Louqsor', ibid., pp. 101–21.

[699] Nos. 7–9, 11, 13, 15, 17–20, 25, 29–30, and 36.

[700] See plan in El-Saghir, Golvin, Reddé, Hegazy, and Wagner, *Le camp romain de Louqsor*, plate 1.

[701] Ibid., p. 115.

[702] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 378; Heilporn, *Thèbes et ses taxes*, pp. 62–4.

[703] See El-Saghir, Golvin, Reddé, Hegazy, and Wagner, *Le camp romain de Louqsor*, p. 121 (no. 52).

[704] Bagnall, *JEA* 76 (1990), p. 253. As noted by Vandorpe in Vleeming (ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, pp. 235–6, some Roman troops had already been sent to Thebes before the second century AD, so it is possible that this graffito is even earlier.

have knowingly destroyed or damaged one of the latter god's most important temples.[705] This argument has considerable merit, which makes it all the more probable that the temple of Luxor was no longer functioning at the time when Diocletian converted it to military use. His decision to do so is likely to have been motivated by the fact that the edifice had been abandoned and was standing empty. In such a state, it would have been ideally suited for adaptation or exploitation for other purposes. In this respect, the temple of Luxor, despite its former pre-eminence, was no different from temples elsewhere in Egypt that were being adapted or exploited in similar ways around the same time.[706]

7.4.10.3. Ironworkers from Armant and their donkey sacrifices at Deir el-Bahri

Before we finish with Thebes, one final group of Theban texts merits our attention. As noted in section 7.4.3, one room in the mortuary temple of the eighteenth dynasty ruler Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri was devoted to the worship of Imhotep and Amenhotep son of Hapu in the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods. The importance of this cult is attested by a series of votive graffiti written in Greek, which comes to an end at some point during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (AD 161–80). Thereafter there are no further votive graffiti for another hundred years.[707] They begin to reappear, however, near the end of the third century. The later graffiti are inscribed in the four southernmost niches of the west wall of the upper terrace of the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri.[708] The earliest of them (no. 161), a *proskynema* addressed to the lords Amenhotep son of Hapu and Asklepios (scil. Imhotep) was written in July or August 283. Although the writer does not specify his place of origin or that of his companions, the names of some of them (Pamonthes, Plenis) suggest that this was probably Armant.[709]

Six graffiti, nos. 163–4, 168–9, and 172–3, are of particular interest. These record visits to the temple made by a corporation of ironworkers from Armant.[710] The earliest was written in AD 283 or 284, the latest in 332.[711] Two of the graffiti (nos. 163 and 168) record visits that extended over the first and second days of the month of Tybi (= December 27 and 28). A third (no. 169) records a visit in the same month, but

[705] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 376–7.

[706] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, p. 125, cites the example of a temple of Mandulis at Kalabsha in the mid-third century AD that had been converted into a pigsty. For similar cases where temples were converted to secular use or exploited as sources of building material, see Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, pp. 390, 405–9, 417–21, and 429–30; Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri*, p. 135; Medini, *Topoi* 20 (2016), pp. 253–4 and 271–3.

[707] Łajtar in Delattre and Heilporn (eds), *'Et maintenant ne sont plus que des villages…'*, p. 123.

[708] See Łajtar, *Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, pp. 94–103 and 239–64.

[709] Ibid., pp. 242–4. Cf. Lanciers, *CdE* 90 (2015), p. 129.

[710] Łajtar, *Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, pp. 95–102, 248–50, and 253–64.

[711] For the latter date, see R. Bagnall, 'The Last Donkey Sacrifice at Deir el-Bahari', *JJP* 34 (2004), pp. 15–21.

without indicating on which day(s) it took place. None of the three remaining graffiti (nos. 164 and 172–3) mentions a day or month.

The graffiti make it clear that the ironworkers' visits to the temple were religiously motivated. Three (nos. 163 and 168–9) say that they performed an act of *proskynema* there, although the wording used is not the traditional one.[712] Unfortunately, the object of their devotion is never named. In one graffito (no. 169) this is said to be 'the god'. In another (no. 168), it is 'the great god', and in the other (no. 163) 'the lords'. As noted in the opening paragraph of this section, the last is attested as a designation of Amenhotep son of Hapu and Asklepios/Imhotep in another graffito from Deir el-Bahri (no. 161).[713] Interestingly, three graffiti (nos. 163, 168, and 172) make reference to sacrificing a donkey. In one instance (no. 168), this act is specifically said to have been performed in the presence of the god.

The donkey was associated with Seth, the murderer of Osiris. Accordingly, donkeys were sacrificed during certain festivals celebrated in honour of the latter god. These included the Sokar Festival, since Sokar and Osiris were identified with each other. A number of Egyptian sources make reference to the sacrifice of a wild ass on 26 Khoiak, which marked the culmination of the Sokar Festival, especially in connection with the Opening of the Mouth Ritual which restored the god to life.[714] Since two of the three known donkey sacrifices performed by the ironworkers of Armant took place at the beginning of the month of Tybi, only five days after 26 Khoiak, some have concluded that they must have been linked with the Sokar Festival.[715] If this is correct, then the Deir el-Bahri graffiti provide incontrovertible evidence for the continuation of this feast into the fourth century AD.

There are some problems with this view, however. One is that direct evidence for the Sokar Festival at Thebes ceases after the second century AD. However, the decorative panels of a group of mummy masks found at Deir el-Bahri depict the *henu*-bark of Sokar flanked by jackals with keys to the underworld or other religious symbols. These have been dated to the middle or late third century, by which time the ironworkers from Armant were already making visits to the temple there, so if one accepts them as indirect evidence for the continuation of the Sokar Festival, the gap is bridged to some extent. Another problem is that we do not know the identity of the god(s) whom the ironworkers came to Deir el-Bahri to honour. The location of the graffiti, along with the wording of some of them, referring to a sacrifice or *proskynema* actually made in the god's presence, suggests that this was Amenhotep son of Hapu, Imhotep, or both. But neither deity is attested as a recipient of donkey sacrifices elsewhere.[716]

[712] Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri*, pp. 96 note 416 and 108 note 494.

[713] Łajtar, *Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, pp. 95–102, 248–50, and 253–64.

[714] See ibid., pp. 97–9; J. Yoyotte, *Histoire, géographie et religion de l'Égypte ancienne* (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, 2013), pp. 333–9; Leitz, *Geographisch-osirianische Prozessionen aus Philae, Dendara und Athribis*, pp. 362–3; von Lieven, *RdE* 61 (2010), p. 98.

[715] Łajtar, *Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, pp. 98–9; Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, pp. 397–8.

[716] Łajtar, *Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, pp. 100–1.

A third problem is the date of the sacrifices in question. In the two graffiti where this is specified, they are said to have taken place five days after the expected date, 26 Khoiak, by which time the Sokar Festival would already have finished. Some try to get around this difficulty by arguing that the feast may have run over into the next month on these occasions,[717] but this does not explain why the sacrifice itself should have been postponed. It cannot have been because the ironworkers had to catch a suitable donkey first, since one graffito (no. 168) indicates that they brought their own along with them, entrusted to the charge of a donkey keeper.

A final problem is that, already by the second century AD, Sokar seems no longer to have played a significant role in the festival of which he was originally the chief focus. Instead, the feast which took place on the west bank of the river in the second half of the month of Khoiak now centred on Montu-Re-Harakhti and the processional journey he made from Armant to Medinet Habu in order to give offerings to his divine ancestors.[718] One text actually describes 26 Khoiak as 'the beautiful feast' of that god.[719] Sokar was only one of several recipients of the oblations presented on that occasion, alongside other deities like Kematef and the Ogdoad. He himself is not even mentioned by name.[720] Thus the emphasis of the festival seems to have shifted from one divine generation to another, so that the younger god who provided the offerings became more important than his ancestors who received them. Sokar is not the only god whose feast Montu-Re-Harakhti seems to have taken over in this manner during the waning days of traditional Egyptian religion at Thebes. In much the same way, he supplanted Amun to become the chief god of the Opet Festival as well.[721]

This development could help to explain why the ironworkers from Armant sacrificed their donkeys at the beginning of Tybi on two occasions. This was the date of the feast celebrating the enthronement of Horus, the son of Osiris, as rightful ruler of Egypt, after he had avenged his father and punished his murderer Seth.[722] When the Sokar Festival ceased to be primarily about the dead god and his resurrection, and focused more on the activities of his son and successor, perhaps the distinction between it and the following enthronement feast was blurred, given that both celebrated the deeds of a vigorous youthful deity who had triumphed over his enemy. As a consequence, the beginning of Tybi may have come to be regarded as a more auspicious time to sacrifice animals associated with Seth than the Sokar Festival itself. This is speculation, however. The fact remains that we do not really know to which deity or deities the donkeys mentioned in our graffiti were sacrificed, or, for that matter, what purpose their ritual slaughter was supposed to achieve.

[717] e.g. Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 397. [718] Ibid., pp. 392–7.
[719] Ibid., p. 393. [720] See, for example, texts cited ibid., pp. 348–63. [721] Ibid., pp. 357–8.
[722] For this festival, see M. Alliot, *Le culte d'Horus à Edfou au temps des Ptolémées* 2 (Cairo, 1954), pp. 561–676; Łajtar, *Deir el-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, p. 99; A. Egberts, 'Mythos und Fest: Überlegungen zur Dekoration der westlichen Innenseite der Umfassungsmauer im Tempel von Edfu', in R. Gundlach and M. Rochholz (eds), *4. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung: Feste im Tempel* (Wiesbaden, 1998), pp. 23–5; A. Egberts, 'The Chronology of the Horus Myth at Edfu', in J. van Dijk (ed.), *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman te Velde* (Groningen, 1997), pp. 47–54.

The significance of these graffiti is often exaggerated by those who seek to push the evidence for the survival of traditional Egyptian religious practices at Thebes to the latest possible date. Typically, Frankfurter claims that the ironworkers of Armant traveled to Deir el-Bahri to sacrifice donkeys 'throughout much of the fourth century'.[723] As we have seen, the extant graffiti from the temple do not even cover a third of that period. Likewise, Klotz makes reference to the 'annual' trips of the ironworkers to Deir el-Bahri.[724] But a total of six visits in the space of forty-eight years hardly qualifies as annual. According to Klotz, moreover, these trips 'do not represent random or isolated expressions of Late Period paganism by a small club of devoted followers'. Rather, he says, 'this group from Armant carried out a traditional festival procession to Djeme, possibly dating back to the New Kingdom, which had grown in importance during the first two centuries CE'.[725] But contrary to what Klotz says, none of the graffiti ever mentions a procession. Nor do they say that the ironworkers went anywhere near Djeme. Furthermore, the Sokar Festival, far from increasing in importance during the first two centuries of our era, had effectively disappeared by the end of the second century AD.

All the evidence points to the conclusion that the visits to Deir el-Bahri made by the ironworkers from Armant were after all nothing but 'random or isolated expressions of Late Period paganism by a small club of devoted followers'. They do, nevertheless, provide evidence for the persistence of at least some traditional Egyptian religious practices at Thebes until the end of the first third of the fourth century AD. But the practices in question were not those of actual residents of that city, as far as we can judge. Rather, they were only engaged in by visitors from Armant, approximately 20 km away to the south. Traditional Egyptian religion survived longer there than it did at Thebes itself. Proof of this is provided by stelae pertaining to the cult of the sacred bull Buchis. Two of these were inscribed in the fourth century, the later of them in AD 340. This stela records the death of a Buchis bull on 4 November of that year.[726] It seems to be the case, therefore, that even after the disappearance of traditional Egyptian religion at Thebes itself, adherents of the old faith from elsewhere continued to visit the city and its holy places to express their devotion to the local gods.[727]

[723] Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*, p. 64.

[724] Klotz, *Caesar in the City of Amun*, p. 398.

[725] Ibid., p. 398.

[726] For Buchis stelae of the third and fourth centuries, see ibid., pp. 380 and 398; L. Goldbrunner, *Buchis: Eine Untersuchung zur Theologie des heiligen Stieres in Theben zur griechisch-römischen Zeit* (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 78–9, 116–18, 161, and 301–2; J.-C. Grenier, 'La stèle funéraire du dernier taureau Bouchis (Caire JE 31901 = Stèle Bucheum 20)', *BIFAO* 83 (1983), pp. 197–208; J.-C. Grenier, 'La stèle de la mère d'un Bouchis datée de Licinius et de Constantin', *BIFAO* 102 (2002), pp. 247–58; J.-C. Grenier, 'Remarques sur les datations et titulatures de trois stèles romaines du Bucheum', *BIFAO* 103 (2003), pp. 267–79; J.-C. Grenier, 'Notes sur l'Égypte romaine (I, 1–7)', *CdE* 63 (1988), pp. 69–71. For what may be further evidence of the persistence of traditional Egyptian religion at Armant in the fourth century, see note 683.

[727] For the concept of the west bank of Thebes and its monuments as a sacred landscape in antiquity, see Montserrat and Meskell, *JEA* 83 (1997), pp. 196–7.

7.5. CONCLUSIONS

7.5.1. General observations on the case studies presented in this chapter

In this chapter, we have sought to trace the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife in Egypt using four different places as case studies: Akhmim, Philae, Abydos, and Thebes. The evidence for such belief ceases at different times in each of them. At Akhmim and its environs it runs out in the third quarter of the third century AD, at Philae, three quarters of the way through the fourth century, and at Abydos in the middle of the second century, possibly even earlier. At Thebes, direct evidence for belief in Osiris as god of the dead ceases after the first decade of the third century AD, but indirect evidence suggests that it may have persisted there into subsequent decades of that century as well. The results of our investigation bear out the warning given in the introduction to this chapter that we should not assume belief in the Osirian afterlife disappeared at the same time in every part of the country. The evidence shows clearly that it did not.

Another point emphasized in the introduction was the need to distinguish between belief in Osiris himself and belief in the Osirian afterlife for the purposes of our study, since it is possible that the former could have persisted after the latter had died out. This too is borne out by the results of our investigation, which show that the evidence for the end of one is not always coterminous with that for the end of the other. Only at Akhmim and Abydos do the two coincide. At Philae, the evidence for a cult of Osiris continues until the middle of the fifth century AD, about 75 years after that for belief in the Osirian afterlife disappears. At Thebes, magical texts provide evidence for a form of belief in Osiris, although not an organized cult, as late as the fourth century, at least 100 years after direct evidence for belief in Osiris as god of the dead comes to an end.

The final point stressed in the introduction was that, although it is important to study the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife in the context of the end of traditional Egyptian religion as a whole, we should not assume that the two are identical, since not all features of traditional Egyptian religion disappeared at the same time. This was certainly true in the places that we investigated. At Akhmim and its environs, there is evidence that some features of traditional Egyptian religion, although not belief in Osiris, survived as late as the first part of the fourth century AD. We have evidence for the continued practice of non-Christian forms of religion in the Akhmim area in the latter part of the fourth century and in the fifth century as well, but this is either Greek or else a sort of bland, generic paganism with no distinctive regional or local features, probably amounting to little more than popular superstition. By this date, the characteristically Akhmimic forms of traditional Egyptian religion and its expression had totally disappeared.

At Philae, the latest secure evidence for traditional Egyptian cultic activity is a Greek graffito written in AD 456 or 457, four or five years after the latest one that

mentions Osiris. However, the individuals mentioned in the former are related to those mentioned in the latter, and probably shared the same beliefs, so it is unlikely that the cult of the god had ceased during the interval. A petition written by Dioscorus of Aphrodito in 567 accuses an unnamed individual of reopening temples and encouraging the Blemmyes, a tribe living in the area to the south of the island of Philae, to revert to pagan worship. But it is not clear whether the temples in question are those on Philae or not. In any case, the tendentious nature of this document as a whole is sufficient to bring it under suspicion, so it cannot be used as reliable evidence for the persistence of paganism in the Philae region as late as the mid-sixth century AD.

At Abydos, we know that traditional Egyptian religion persisted into the second half of the fourth century, well after the evidence for belief in Osiris there has come to an end. The oracle of Bes in the temple of Seti I was closed down by imperial decree in 359, but a Greek graffito in the temple which mentions that god is accompanied by the writer's horoscope, which shows that he was born on 21 or 22 September 353. The graffito almost certainly post-dates the decree; otherwise the writer would have been only 6 years old when he inscribed it and his horoscope on the temple wall. Thus it would appear the Abydene cult of Bes continued for at least a short time after it had been officially banned, perhaps another one and a half or two decades.

At Thebes, evidence for the practice of traditional Egyptian religion by actual residents of that city can only be traced as far as the third century AD. As we have seen, however, small groups of people from Armant continued to visit Thebes for religious purposes as late as the end of the first third of the fourth century. So traditional religious activity went on there, but Thebans did not participate, as far as one can judge. Magical texts from Thebes mention numerous other traditional Egyptian deities in addition to Osiris. Some of these manuscripts date to the fourth century. The belief system that underlies them clearly has roots in traditional Egyptian religion. But whether they should be regarded as a manifestation of that religion, or as a development away from it into something sufficiently distinct to merit separate classification, is a matter requiring further investigation.

As will be evident from the preceding paragraphs, each of the four places we have investigated reveals its own distinct patterns of change. This is true not only in terms of when particular developments occur, but in other ways as well. In some places, one sees a gradual contraction of the range of types of evidence for belief in Osiris as god of the dead. At Thebes, for instance, lengthy texts for the afterlife disappear first, followed by shorter ones. Finally, written evidence ceases altogether and we have only representations. In the Akhmim region, on the other hand, written evidence, in the form of mummy labels, persists longer. There, moreover, we observe a contraction in terms of the geographical spread of the evidence as well. In its final phases, evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife is restricted solely to the west side of the river. Likewise at Philae, the number of spaces within temples where graffiti in honour of Osiris are written becomes gradually more circumscribed

with the passage of time. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the fact that evidence for a particular belief disappears does not invariably mean that the belief itself has vanished as well.[728] Nevertheless, if that evidence was previously abundant for an uninterrupted period of centuries, its disappearance is surely significant.

In the places that we have investigated, Osirian belief is attested in both official and private religious spheres. In most instances, it appears to have persisted in the latter longer than it did in the former. This bears out another point stressed in the introduction to the present chapter: the importance of taking into consideration, not only evidence for the continuation of the cult of Osiris in temples, but that for veneration of the god outside institutional contexts as well. One particularly interesting phenomenon is the persistence with which some continue to hold the belief that a particular place is sacred or holy, long after the sort of cultic activity that gave rise to or institutionalized that belief has ceased there. The visits made to Deir el-Bahri by ironworkers from Armant in the third and fourth centuries are one manifestation of this phenomenon. Another is the frequency with which Abydos and its cult places, including the tomb of Osiris, are evoked in Theban magical texts of the same date.

This leads us neatly to one of the chief questions that we set out to answer in the present chapter. What role did the state play in the disappearance of traditional Egyptian beliefs about Osiris and his relationship with the deceased? Is there any evidence that they came to an end as a result of intervention by a ruler or government? Probably the best way to answer this question is to say yes and no. On the one hand, the gradual withdrawal of state support for Egyptian temples and other religious institutions during the second and third centuries was a severe blow to their sustainability.[729] Without this support, they had no chance of any long-term survival. Temples that hosted cults of Osiris would have been no less affected by this development than any others.

On the other hand, we have seen that belief in the Osirian afterlife was not dependent on the continuation of that god's cult in temples. In some places, it survived even after his temple cult had ceased. So in theory, it could have continued indefinitely, but it did not. We will explore possible reasons for this in the concluding chapter. Here it will suffice to note that there is no evidence for suppression of belief in the Osirian afterlife by the state. Nor, in view of all that we have learned about the limited power of rulers and governments to influence what ordinary people actually believed, is it easy to imagine how such a policy could have been implemented, even if a conscious decision to do so had been taken.

[728] Cf. Medini, *Topoi* 20 (2016), pp. 243–5 and 258–9.

[729] Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, pp. 260–8. For the financial administration of Egyptian temples under Roman rule, see Medini, *Topoi* 20 (2016), pp. 247–53.

7.5.2. Evidence for the end of belief in Osiris and the Osirian afterlife from sites not covered in the case studies

The four case studies that we have investigated do not cover the whole of Egypt. It would be possible to extend the same treatment to other cities and regions of the country as well. However, the results of such an exercise would not really alter the picture that has emerged from our study of the four places selected for investigation in this chapter. In other parts of Egypt, as in these places, belief in the Osirian afterlife gradually disappeared during the course of the second and third centuries AD. Magical texts apart, which I would treat as a special case, there is no direct evidence for persistence of belief in Osiris as late as the fourth century anywhere in Egypt other than Philae. The graffiti from that island studied in sections 7.2.3–4 are by far the latest witnesses that we have for the survival of such belief.

I cite a few examples here to illustrate the point. According to the Würzburg SERaT database, the latest temple scene in which Osiris appears as the recipient of an offering is one in the temple of Esna dated to the reign of Caracalla (AD 198–217).[730] The latest temple scene in which he is mentioned at all occurs in the temple of Kom Ombo and dates to the reign of Macrinus (AD 217–18).[731] Painted wooden panels from the Fayum depict Isis, Harpocrates, and other traditional Egyptian deities, albeit in strongly Hellenized form.[732] Some portray Sarapis together with a goddess who is probably Isis,[733] but none actually shows Osiris. In any case, the majority of these panels date to the second century. Only a very few may be as late as the first half of the third century.[734]

A few Greek papyri of the second and third centuries from Fayum towns like Tebtunis and Soknopaiu Nesos refer to 26 Khoiak in connection with a *Σαραπιεῖα*, or feast in honour of Sarapis. Given the importance of that date in the mysteries of Osiris it is likely that this was an Osirian feast.[735] A papyrus from Oxyrhynchus dating to the end of the third century mentions a *κυνώπης*, a person who wears a mask with the head of a dog. The individual in question may have been impersonating Anubis in a ritual re-enactment of the events surrounding Osiris's death and resurrection.[736] Osiris features prominently in a number of ritual and narrative texts from the library of the temple at Tebtunis, but none of these is later than the end of the second century.[737]

[730] S. Sauneron, *Esna* 6 (Cairo, 1975), pp. 62–4, no. 494. Sauneron identifies the officiating king as Marcus Aurelius.

[731] J. de Morgan, U. Bouriant, G. Legrain, G. Jéquier, and A. Barsanti, *Kom Ombos* 2 (Vienna, 1909), p. 310, no. 956. In the scene in question, the king is shown offering to Nephthys, who is called 'the one who protects her brother Osiris'.

[732] Rondot, *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte*, pp. 241–60.

[733] See section 6.6.8.3.

[734] Rondot, *Derniers visages des dieux d'Égypte*, pp. 35–6.

[735] See F. Perpillou-Thomas, *Fêtes d'Égypte ptolémaïque et romaine d'après le documentation papyrologique grecque* (Leuven, 1993), pp. 130–2.

[736] Ibid., pp. 134–5.

[737] See J. Quack, 'Die hieratischen und hieroglyphischen Papyri aus Tebtynis—ein Überblick', in K. Ryholt (ed.), *The Carlsberg Papyri 7: Hieratic Texts from the Collection* (Copenhagen, 2006), pp. 1–7; K. Ryholt, 'On the Contents and Nature of the Tebtunis Temple Library: A Status Report', in S. Lippert and

Shrouds and other objects decorated with images of Osiris or symbols associated with the Osirian afterlife have been discovered at sites like Saqqara and Antinoopolis, but despite the claims of Parlasca and others, there are no grounds for dating any of these later than the third century.[738] The same applies to coffins from Bagawat, which some have assigned to the fourth century.[739] Mummy portraits have been found at a number of places in Egypt. Some of these were attached to mummies adorned with depictions of Osiris and related motives.[740] One portrait of the first century AD even has a demotic text requesting that the *ba* of the woman depicted might live before Osiris Sokar inscribed on it.[741] But no mummy portraits were produced after the third century, and the majority of them are probably earlier than that.[742] A number of Greek papyri from Hermopolis and elsewhere make reference to temples, priests, processions, and other forms of cultic activity in the third and early fourth centuries, but none of these appears to have involved Osiris.[743] A stela from Armant that records the death of a Buchis bull on 4 November AD 340 invokes the deceased animal as Osiris Buchis, but the text makes no reference to Osiris himself.[744]

One of the surviving fragments of Damascius's biography of his teacher Isidore records that the body of the Alexandrian philosopher Heraiskos, who died in or after AD 487, was wrapped with 'garments of Osiris' that bore 'ineffable letters' and 'god-like shapes of apparitions', which some interpret to mean that they were decorated in Egyptian or pseudo-Egyptian style.[745] However, this hardly constitutes evidence of continued belief in the Osirian afterlife. To judge from what Damascius tells us about Heraiskos, he was not so much a devotee of Osiris as he was an Egyptomaniac, to use van Minnen's felicitous description.[746] If he were alive today, he would probably wear

M. Schentuleit (eds), *Tebtynis und Soknopaiu Nesos: Leben im römerzeitlichen Fajum* (Wiesbaden, 2005), pp. 141–70.

[738] For Parlasca's dating of shrouds from Saqqara to the fourth century, see K. Parlasca, *Ritratti di mummie* 3 (Rome, 1980), pp. 46–8. B. Borg, *Mumienporträts: Chronologie und kultureller Kontext* (Mainz am Rhein, 1996), p. 178, assigns them to the third century. I am grateful to Jónatan Ortiz García for discussing the date of these and related objects with me and providing the references cited in this footnote. His preferred dating of the Saqqara shrouds to the middle or the second half of the third century will be defended in his forthcoming PhD thesis.

[739] See F. Dunand and R. Lichtenberg, *Mummies and Death in Egypt* (Ithaca, 2006), pp. 80–1 and 87, figures 112–13 and 127. For a third-century date for these objects, see W. Hauser, 'The Christian Necropolis in Khargeh Oasis', *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 27, no. 3, part 2 (1932), pp. 42–50, especially p. 50 (references courtesy of Jónatan Ortiz García).

[740] See examples in L. Corcoran, *Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt* (Chicago, 1995).

[741] See E. Doxiadis, *The Mysterious Fayum Portraits: Faces from Ancient Egypt* (London, 1995), p. 173.

[742] B. Borg, 'Problems in the Dating of the Mummy Portraits', ibid., pp. 229–33; Borg, *Mumienporträts*, pp. 19–84.

[743] Medini, *Topoi* 20 (2016), pp. 254–6 and 258–60; P. Sánchez, P. Schubert, and Y. Volokhine, 'Une dédicace grecque de l'époque impériale tardive trouvée à Hermonthis (Ermant, Haute-Égypte)', *ZPE* 174 (2010), pp. 127–32; Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, pp. 404–5.

[744] Goldbrunner, *Buchis*, plate 12, no. 20; Grenier, *BIFAO* 83 (1983), pp. 198–9.

[745] See e.g. F. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c.370–529* 1 (Leiden, New York, and Cologne, 1993), pp. 45–6.

[746] Van Minnen in Egberts, Muhs, and van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, p. 181 note 23.

t-shirts printed with ancient Egyptian motifs and own at least one item of personal jewellry on which his name was spelled out in hieroglyphs. One could go on adding further examples, but as those already cited clearly show, the temporal range of evidence for Osirian belief from places that we have not investigated in this chapter is broadly similar to that of the evidence from those that we have, even if the nature of the evidence may vary in terms of detail from one place to another.

7.5.3. Prospects for further research

One could also extend the investigation to areas outside of Egypt. In a sense, we have already done this in our analysis of the material from Philae, where we considered the possibility that the latest devotees of Osiris there may not have been Egyptians at all, but rather members of Nubian tribes dwelling to the south of that island who retained the old faith longer than those living in Egypt itself did. However, we should not leave the Mediterranean world out of consideration. There is some evidence to suggest that Osiris continued to be venerated in some Mediterranean countries as long as or even longer than he was in most parts of Egypt itself other than Philae.[747] According to a poem of Rutilius Namatianus, for example, a festival was celebrated at Faleria in Italy as late as AD 417 to mark the day when Osiris, newly restored to life, induced the buds of plants to sprout.[748] But it is questionable how close a relationship such veneration bore to that accorded to Osiris in his Egyptian homeland.

One could also consider the continued transmission of the myth of Osiris in tradition and legend, and the various uses to which it has been put. Allusions to it are made by a number of Christian apologists and polemicists, including Aristides (second century AD), Athenagoras (*c.*133–90), Theodoret (*c.*393–466), and Firmicus Maternus (died after 360), none of whom actually lived in Egypt or are known to have visited there.[749] Undoubtedly their sources for information about Osiris were the works of earlier Greek writers rather than anyone possessing direct knowledge of his cult. This is reflected in the fact that sometimes what they say is garbled or incorrect. Firmicus Maternus, for instance, wrongly identifies Isis as the wife of Seth rather than Osiris and says that the latter's body was cremated.[750] Nevertheless, the fact that writers like

[747] For a selection of such evidence, see L. Bricault, *Les cultes isiaques dans le monde gréco-romain* (Paris, 2013), p. 555, s.v. Osiris, and references cited there.

[748] *De Reditu Suo*, lines 371–6. See C. Keene and G. Savage-Armstrong, *Rutilii Claudii Namatiani De Reditu Suo* (London, 1907), pp. 138–9; Bricault, *Les cultes isiaques dans le monde gréco-romain*, pp. 393–4; Kákosy in Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 18.5, p. 2947.

[749] For references to Osiris in the works of Christian authors, see J.G. Griffiths, *The Conflict of Horus and Seth from Egyptian and Classical Sources* (Liverpool, 1960), pp. 112–13; F. Gaudard, *The Demotic Drama of Horus and Seth (P. Berlin 8278A, B, C; 15662; 15677; 15818; 23536; 23537A, B, C, D, E, F, G)* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2005), p. 8.

[750] Cf. A. von Lieven, 'Seth ist im Recht, Osiris ist im Unrecht!', *ZÄS* 133 (2006), pp. 148–50; R. Turcan, *Firmicus Maternus: L'erreur des religions païennes* (Paris, 1982), pp. 78–9.

him knew of the myth at all is testimony to its wide circulation in the world beyond Egypt's borders.

Further afield, Ray has drawn attention to a medieval Arabic epic, the *Tale of Al-Zîr*, which has some interesting parallels with the Osiris myth.[751] Reference is also made to Osiris in the works of some Greek, Latin, and Arab alchemists.[752] In Europe, the Renaissance classical scholar and poet Angelo Poliziano (1437–97) gave lectures on Osiris and Harpocrates and employed the Osiris myth to explain the symbolic significance of the emblems on Roman military standards.[753] A Dominican abbot from Viterbo, Giovanni Nanni (1432–1502), propounded the view that Osiris had come to Italy to teach the inhabitants of that land the principles of agriculture and wine production. A loyal retainer of Pope Alexander VI, he also tried to prove that the Borgia family to which that pontiff belonged was descended directly from Osiris. Unfortunately, this failed to ingratiate him with the other members of the family and he met his end when he was poisoned by Caesar Borgia, the son of his employer.[754] In more recent times, the Osiris myth has been exploited in works of literature ranging from Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* to James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.[755] It has also been employed for therapeutic purposes by Jungian or analytical psychologists.[756] But this is material for another book.

7.5.4. Suggestions on how to investigate the demise of an Egyptian deity

Although the case studies presented in this chapter only focus upon four places, I hope that they might serve as a template or model showing how one should approach the problem of trying to discover when belief in Osiris or any other Egyptian god or goddess came to an end. The principles that underlie this model are the following.

(1) We should proceed on a local or regional basis.
(2) We should start by familiarizing ourselves with the evidence relating to the specific region we are investigating. What forms did local religion take, what was religious life like there, who were the most important deities and how were they worshipped, especially in the Graeco-Roman Period?

[751] J. Ray, 'Osiris in Mediaeval Egypt', in C. Eyre, A. Leahy, and L. Montagno Leahy (eds), *The Unbroken Reed: Studies in the Culture and Heritage of Ancient Egypt in Honour of A.F. Shore* (London, 1994), pp. 273–80.

[752] E. Hornung, *The Secret Lore of Egypt: Its Impact on the West* (Ithaca and London, 2001), pp. 38–40 and 211.

[753] E. Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition* (Copenhagen, 1961), p. 62.

[754] Ibid., pp. 62–3; Hornung, *The Secret Lore of Egypt*, p. 86.

[755] See J. Irwin, *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance* (New Haven, 1980), pp. 293–317; M. Troy, *The Mummeries of Resurrection: The Cycle of Osiris in Finnegans Wake* (Uppsala, 1976).

[756] See P. Schilm, *Der Osiris-Mythos als Medium von Lebensführung und Lebensdeutung* (Hamburg, 1999).

(3) We should be sensitive to the chronological distribution of the evidence for such religious activities, noting in particular when it runs out or comes to an end.
(4) In some cases, when there is no other evidence, this may be as much as we can do. In other cases, we may also need to take later sources into account, for example, Coptic hagiographies or Greek literary texts.
(5) We need to evaluate the latter critically. We should be cautious about using later material, especially Coptic sources like the writings of Shenoute and the biographies of monks like Aaron and Moses of Abydos as evidence, bearing in mind that these are literary, often highly rhetorical sources, and taking into account the specific purposes for which they were written.
(6) We should ask whether the writers of such sources record accurate information about the cults and monuments in the places they describe. Do they portray local traditions correctly or not?
(7) We should consider whether or not these accounts incorporate supernatural elements, for example, miracles and interventions by angels.
(8) We should note whether there is a significant chronological gap separating sources of this type that relate to a particular locality from the latest contemporary evidence for traditional Egyptian cultic activity there. If so, how can one account for such a gap?
(9) If such a source displays no awareness of local traditions, contains demonstrable inaccuracies, incorporates supernatural elements, or is set in a period long after all first-hand evidence for the sort of religious activities it purports to describe has ceased and one cannot account for the chronological gap separating it and that evidence, then its historical value is nil.

7.5.5. The problematic status of Coptic hagiographies as historical sources

On the basis of the last principle listed above, most of the literary works that we have examined in the present chapter, whether Coptic or Greek, fail to qualify for acceptance as trustworthy historical sources. But this does not mean that such texts are without value. Rather, their value is of a different sort. As Dijkstra has noted, Coptic hagiographies exemplify a form of spiritual communication between their authors and the regional audiences to whom they were addressed.[757] They show us how writers aimed to involve those audiences in the narratives that they composed, both to edify them and facilitate construction of Christian identity in places where the monumental remains of a non-Christian past were conspicuous features of the local landscape.[758] This is the real contribution that they make to our understanding of religious life in late antique Egypt.

[757] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 253–4.
[758] See section 7.2.6.1.

Nevertheless, there are a few who maintain that it is possible to exploit these texts for historical purposes by treating them selectively, separating the wheat of fact from the fictional chaff with which it is mingled.[759] This approach occasionally causes awkward problems for those who employ it, however. Stadler, for instance, notes that some accept the essential historicity of Coptic hagiographies that describe Egyptian temples as still functioning as late as the fifth century AD, even though a number of these narratives also incorporate obvious supernatural elements like angels who come down to help or encourage their protagonists in moments of crisis. He observes that it is difficult to reconcile such reports of still-functioning temples with the fact that no temple rituals written later than the second century are extant.[760] Perhaps we should consider the possibility that angels flew down from heaven and confiscated them. A further disadvantage of this approach is that it assumes that the person using it is actually capable of distinguishing historical fact from fiction, and as critical scrutiny of a number of modern treatments of Coptic hagiographies in this chapter has shown, that is not always the case.

In view of this situation, it is not surprising that attempts to extract historical information from Coptic hagiographies are often met with scepticism, if not outright disdain. More than 60 years ago, the Belgian scholar Paul Peeters dismissed the study of such texts as 'une discipline frappée d'infantilisme'.[761] In recent decades, this credibility problem has been exacerbated by the rise of what might be termed an 'end of paganism in Egypt industry', in which article after article is churned out by a small circle of individuals who write obsessively about a minute sample of Coptic sources: a handful of Shenoute's works supplemented by a few hagiographical texts like the panegyric on Macarius of Tkow. Many of these articles are published, not in peer-reviewed journals, but in volumes edited or co-edited by one or more of their authors, in series edited or co-edited by them, or both.[762] It is legitimate to wonder how rigorous editorial scrutiny has been in such cases. The present chapter is not about the end of Egyptian religion per se. Nevertheless, I hope that it might help to raise standards among those who study its demise by offering an alternative approach to the problems which the investigation of that subject poses, as well as drawing attention to the breadth and diversity of primary sources available for this purpose to anyone who has the expertise to control them. Needless to say, if one lacks such expertise, it is probably better to look for a different topic of research.

[759] See for example, Frankfurter in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, pp. 137–8 and 154–5. Compare Stadler in Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, p. 467.

[760] Ibid., pp. 466–7.

[761] P. Peeters, *Les tréfonds oriental de l'hagiographie byzantine* (Brussels, 1950), p. 28, quoted by van Minnen in Dijkstra and van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert*, p. 67.

[762] Typical products of this industry are the articles of Emmel and Frankfurter in *From Temple to Church*, a volume jointly edited by the former and published in a series jointly edited by the latter. For discussion of these, see sections 7.1.7 and 7.1.11.

7.5.6. The two models for the end of traditional Egyptian religion: final remarks

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, there are two models for the end of traditional Egyptian religion, the conflict and triumph model, and the gradual disappearance model. Our investigation has revealed no trustworthy evidence for direct conflict between Christians and adherents of traditional Egyptian religion in the places that we have studied. The only references to such conflict occur in literary sources, most of them written much later than the events that they purport to describe, and these have been shown to be unreliable. The plausibility of the conflict and triumph model is further undermined by incontrovertible evidence from contemporary documentary texts of peaceful co-existence between Christians and non-Christians at Akhmim during the early fourth century. Likewise, contemporary evidence shows that Christians and non-Christians were living side by side on the island of Philae at this time as well.[763] These examples apart, however, our investigation has discovered little evidence for contact of any sort between adherents of traditional Egyptian religion and Christians. It would appear that the latter did not impinge upon the former in any meaningful way in the places that we have studied.

This is not to say that no violent suppression of paganism took place anywhere in Egypt. The attack which led to the closure of the Serapeum in Alexandria in AD 392 is a good example of such suppression.[764] Reports of an incident like this, although not free from problems,[765] are nevertheless credible because they are preserved in a number of different sources, both Christian and non-Christian. This is in marked contrast to the far more numerous accounts of temple destruction in hagiographical texts which are not corroborated by any independent evidence.[766]

Furthermore, at the sites that we have investigated, the evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife, and for the practice of traditional Egyptian religion more generally, does not cease suddenly or all at once. Rather, a gradual process of decline and contraction can be observed, proceeding at different rates in each locality. In some places, this process extends over centuries. Thus the evidence of our four case studies

[763] Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, p. 425.

[764] Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 88.

[765] See Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, pp. 394 and 399, noting inconsistencies among the various reports and the difficulties involved in reconciling these with the archaeological evidence.

[766] A good example of the latter is the account preserved in Zachariah of Mitylene's Life of Severus concerning the destruction of a temple of Isis at Menouthis near Alexandria that was supposedly still functioning in the late fifth century AD (Dijkstra in Lavan and Mulryan [eds], *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, pp. 394–6). This account has been accepted uncritically by some, e.g. Frankfurter in Hahn, Emmel, and Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church*, and Stadler, *Einführung in die ägyptische Religion ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit nach den demotischen religiösen Texten*, pp. 193–4. For a more balanced assessment, see Medini, *Topoi* 20 (2016), p. 267, who concludes that it does not constitute reliable evidence for the survival of a cult of Isis as late as the end of the fifth century.

speaks unambiguously in favour of the gradual disappearance model, not just for belief in the Osirian afterlife, but for traditional Egyptian religion as a whole as well.

To understand what happened, it may be helpful to draw an analogy from the field of palaeontology. The disappearance of the non-avian dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous Period approximately 65 million years ago is often seen as the result of a single cataclysmic event. But this view ignores the fact that, of all the species of dinosaur that arose and flourished during the many millions of years when they were the dominant form of life on earth, less than 1 per cent were still in existence at the time of what is sometimes misleadingly referred to as their 'mass' extinction.[767] The rest had already disappeared as a result of what might be called background, or smaller scale, extinctions, the sort of natural event which happens to all living things. Nor was the demise of the last surviving non-avian dinosaurs the result of competition with other species or the rise of new and more vigorous life forms. Rather, the non-avian dinosaurs disappeared, leaving a vacant ecological niche, which other species like mammals were then free to occupy and exploit.

The evidence we have examined indicates that traditional Egyptian religion ended in much the same way. The old deities disappeared one by one, until only a few remained. In some localities Osiris was among the last survivors; in others he was not. As the moment of terminal extinction drew ever nearer, the niche formerly occupied by traditional Egyptian religion was increasingly left open, and Christianity gradually filled it. The transition from one religion to the other occurred at different times in different places. In some places, there may have been a hiatus in which no single religion was dominant. In others, this may have been a version of the Hellenistic religion imported into Egypt by the Greeks, with which we have not really been concerned in this chapter, perhaps combined with a residue of popular practices that, while clearly not Christian, are not readily ascribable to any other specific religious tradition either.[768] But with the death of the last priests at Philae and the end of traditional cultic activity there, the process of transition seems to have been completed from one end of Egypt to the other. Having flourished for more than 3,000 years, the old gods were no more.

[767] S. Sampson, *Dinosaur Odyssey: Fossil Threads in the Web of Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2009), p. 258.

[768] See section 7.1.13. For survivals of this nature in other countries, see Lavan in Lavan and Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, pp. l–li.

8

Summary of Results: Why Osiris?

Through the course of this book we have followed Osiris over a period of more than four millennia. What have we learned as a result? In this chapter, we will first briefly summarize the results obtained in each of the preceding ones. Then we will discuss the most important themes that recur throughout the book and try to identify the benefits of investigating a topic like belief in the Osirian afterlife using the approach that we have adopted here. We will conclude with some reflections on the question of why this belief arose in the first place and why it came to an end when it did.

8.1. RESULTS OF CHAPTER 1

We began by trying to trace ideas about the afterlife in periods of Egyptian history prior to the earliest evidence that we have for Osiris. In Chapter 1, we focused on the prehistoric and predynastic periods. We found that little can be said in concrete terms about the expectations of the earliest Egyptians for the next world. In fact, it is difficult even to ascertain when belief in an afterlife first arose in the Nile Valley. The most one can say is that by the end of the predynastic period the idea had evolved that the dead required sustenance, which could be provided by the living, and that protecting the deceased's body, for whatever reason, was deemed to be important.

Despite the meagreness of these results, three important points emerged from our investigation. The first was that one cannot make accurate inferences about religious belief, in particular beliefs about the afterlife, from artefacts alone. For this purpose, written evidence is essential. The second was that one cannot project ideas and concepts from later periods back into earlier ones where there is no textual evidence for them unless (a) an unbroken line of continuity can be traced between a concept and its hypothetical antecedent or (b) the context in which the presumed antecedent occurs is sufficiently rich to leave no doubt of the connection between it and the later concept. The third point was that in predynastic Egypt innovations in funerary belief and practice did not always originate among the higher echelons of society or make their first appearance in the most elaborate tombs. Sometimes they appeared in relatively modest or non-elite burials first. Although these points emerged from our investigation

of the earliest evidence for belief in the afterlife in ancient Egypt, they have considerable relevance for our study and interpretation of the evidence for such belief from subsequent periods of Egyptian history as well.

8.2. RESULTS OF CHAPTER 2

In Chapter 2, we focused upon the early dynastic period and the first or 'pre-Osirian' part of the Old Kingdom, that is to say, the fourth dynasty and the fifth dynasty prior to the time when Osiris makes his initial appearance in the historical record. Here, the evidence for belief in the afterlife is much more abundant than in the predynastic period, and includes written sources for the first time. As one might expect, given the greater amount of evidence available, there is much more that can be learned about Egyptian ideas concerning the afterlife during this period, even if many uncertainties remain. Preserving or protecting the body of the deceased continued to be an important concern, although the reasons for this are still difficult to elucidate. The persistence of the earlier practice of dismembering the corpse indicates that corporeal integrity was not yet inextricably linked with posthumous survival. But the period surveyed in Chapter 2 also yields the earliest evidence for belief that the deceased could survive in other forms like the *akh* and the *ka*.

The idea that the deceased required sustenance in the next world persisted and was elaborated in various ways. New methods of supplying their requirements were devised, including provision by means of images and the spoken and written word. To judge from items deposited or depicted in tombs, the needs of the deceased in the afterlife were not thought to be very different to those that they had in this one. The tomb itself served as a sort of base for the owner, and could mimic the design of a house. More generally, the abode of the deceased was thought to be in the west, although it is not clear whether this term designated the necropolis, or a distinct sphere of the cosmos inhabited by the dead, like the underworld in later periods of Egyptian history.

We now find unequivocal evidence for supernatural beings with whom the dead hoped to interact in the next world. Among the most important of these are Anubis and Khentiamentiu, 'Foremost of the westerners'. It is not clear whether the latter is the name of a distinct god in the period surveyed or simply an epithet concealing the identity of another deity. Anubis appears as a donor in offering formulas from the fourth dynasty onwards, where he is asked to ensure burial and provide the material needs of the deceased. He also helps them to reach the west and attain the status of *imakh* in the presence of an anonymous deity designated as 'the great god'. Other deities in whose presence the deceased could enjoy this status include Re, Ptah, and, from the fifth dynasty onward, Anubis himself. When someone was *imakh* in the presence of a deity it meant that the god in question would look after him or her in the afterlife.

It is not clear whether good conduct in this world was viewed as a prerequisite for interaction with deities in the next one at this time. Although some sources refer to

litigation involving the deceased, and one (which slightly post-dates the period covered in Chapter 2) refers to the righteous in conjunction with the *imakhu*, there is no unequivocal evidence for a general judgement of the dead in the Old Kingdom. By contrast, there is abundant evidence that the deceased's transition from this world to the next was accomplished by means of rites. Some of the rituals involved, e.g. recitation of glorification spells and the Rite of Opening the Mouth, are attested in later periods as well, while others are not.

It is evident that the Egyptian afterlife was envisaged as a communal one during this period. Our sources refer to groups like the *kas* and the *imakhu*, and some Old Kingdom inscriptions describe the cemetery as a *niw.t*, 'town' or 'city', thus implying that those buried there were members of a community in some sense. Nevertheless, we found no evidence of any belief that the social structure of this world would be mirrored in the hereafter. We did find evidence, however, of a wider variety of interaction between the dead and the living, in addition to the cult of offerings. Just as the living cared for the dead, the latter were thought to be able to perform services for the former, for example, interceding on their behalf before the gods. But interaction between the two groups was not always harmonious, and antagonism could arise between them on occasion.

Three other results emerged from Chapter 2. First, no evidence was found to support the widely held view that royal and non-royal expectations for the afterlife differed significantly at any time during the period surveyed. Second, no evidence was found to support the view that the royal sphere was the source of all innovation as far as ideas about and preparation for the hereafter were concerned. In fact, most innovations in this realm are attested in the non-royal sphere first during the period surveyed, but this does not mean that this is where they originated, just as the fact that something is attested first in the royal sphere does not prove that it originated there. It is more likely that the boundaries between the royal and non-royal spheres were less rigidly drawn than is commonly supposed, and that there was a regular exchange of ideas between them, with innovation and borrowing on both sides. Even in non-royal burials, new ideas about and preparations for the next world do not always appear in larger and wealthier tombs first. Finally, the view that royal expectations for the afterlife were grander than non-royal ones during the period covered in this chapter was shown to be based primarily on the fact that royal tombs were more elaborate than non-royal ones. But no evidence was found for any correlation between the size and cost of a tomb and its owner's aspirations for the hereafter.

8.3. RESULTS OF CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 focused on two questions. The first was: how and when did belief in Osiris originate? It was not possible to determine how belief in that god arose, but it was established that the earliest securely datable references to Osiris occur on the northern

false door in the tomb of Ti at Saqqara. This object was decorated and inscribed in the reign of the ephemeral fifth dynasty ruler Reneferef. The earliest reference to Osiris on a royal monument occurs somewhat later, in the pyramid temple of Djedkare Izezi. Thereafter, from the reign of Unis onward, he is mentioned frequently in the corpus of Pyramid Text spells. In view of what we learned in Chapter 2, it is not surprising that references to Osiris appear in non-royal sources before they do in royal ones, although the significance of this should not be overestimated, for reasons explained in that chapter. From his earliest attestations, Osiris was a god associated with the dead, so it appears that belief in Osiris and belief in the Osirian afterlife arose at the same time.

The second question investigated in Chapter 3 was: what is the nature of the relationship envisaged between Osiris and the deceased in the earliest sources that associate the two? In the earliest non-royal inscriptions of this type, Osiris and the dead are clearly two distinct entities, but the latter are dependent on the former for their needs in the afterlife. This relationship is expressed by means of epithets like '*imakh* before Osiris' and the *ḥtp dỉ nswt* offering formula in which the god is named as a donor. Osiris is not the only god on whom the deceased depend, however. He provides their requirements and facilitates their social reintegration in the afterlife along with other deities, some of whom, like Anubis, are attested in this role before Osiris is.

The earliest royal sources that attest to a relationship between the god and the dead are the Pyramid Texts. These make contradictory statements about that relationship. Some spells in the Pyramid Text corpus clearly treat Osiris and the deceased king as distinct entities, while others identify the two with each other. A number of spells do both. These apparent contradictions are resolved, however, when we analyse the Pyramid Texts as ritual utterances rather than expositions of theology or treatises describing what the ancient Egyptians thought would happen in the afterlife. Some statements in them were meant to be valid only in the immediate context of the rite in which they were uttered but not outside of it. Others had validity in the wider world outside that context as well, what we might call the 'world beyond the spell'. Those statements in Pyramid Text utterances that identify the deceased king with Osiris fall into the first category. Those that distinguish the two fall into the second. The deceased king's identity as Osiris was never intended to be socially permanent. Rather it was transitory and ritually contingent. Beyond the world of the spell, the permanent relationship envisaged between deceased kings and Osiris was exactly the same as that envisaged between him and their subjects. Members of both groups were distinct from, and subordinate to, the god.

Our investigation of these two questions raised an issue of broader methodological significance. How should one read and interpret ritual texts? If a spell that identifies the deceased king with Osiris was not supposed to transform him into that god, then what was it supposed to do? More generally, if the contents of a spell are not a reliable guide to its function, how can we determine what its function was? How can we discover what impact the recitation of that utterance was supposed to have in the world beyond the spell?

We found that paratextual evidence, for example, titles and colophons, provides us with a useful means of ascertaining this information. Although relatively rare in the Pyramid Texts, these tell us in a straightforward way what a given ritual utterance was supposed to do. They comment upon the function of the spells without being embedded in their ritual context. Thus their interpretation is not subject to the same ambiguities that limit our understanding of the utterances to which they are attached. Consequently, if a specific statement about the fate of the deceased king in a Pyramid Text spell is confirmed by paratextual evidence, then we are justified in accepting it as evidence of something that the Egyptians of that time actually hoped would happen to the spell's beneficiary in the hereafter. But if that statement is contradicted by paratextual evidence, then it was probably only valid in the context of the ritual in which it was recited and had no wider reality. It emerged from our investigation that the limited amount of paratextual evidence we have from the Pyramid Texts confirms those statements in them that distinguish the king and Osiris and contradicts those that identify them.

Are there any other less ambiguous Old Kingdom sources that can help us to identify those statements in the corpus of Pyramid Text spells that are not just ritually contingent but reflect genuine Egyptian hopes for the afterlife? We saw that the wishes in offering formulas in contemporary private tombs have a major contribution to make in this endeavour, since they give us a very good idea of the things to which the non-royal deceased aspired during the period in question. Strikingly, we can find direct parallels for all of these wishes in both the paratextual evidence preserved in the Pyramid Text corpus and in actual Pyramid Text spells. Not only are the same hopes and aspirations found in private offering formulas reflected in those utterances as well, they cluster together in the same groups in the Pyramid Texts as they do in the private offering formulas, indicating that both drew upon a common source. This further supports the conclusion reached in Chapter 2 that rulers and subjects shared common aspirations for the hereafter during the Old Kingdom. It also demonstrates the importance of viewing the Pyramid Texts from a synchronic perspective, as part of a range of texts for the afterlife that were in use concurrently, each of which can help to elucidate the others.

The Pyramid Texts provide us with the earliest examples of the locution *Wsỉr* NN, in which the name of the deceased king is preceded by that of Osiris. Later in the Old Kingdom, this appears in private tombs as well. We found that, initially, the locution served to identify the dead as recipients of sustenance under the auspices of Osiris, although it soon came to be a more generic marker of the deceased's affiliation with the god. In this respect, *Wsỉr* NN is not unlike the epithet '*imakh* before Osiris' or the *ḥtp dỉ nswt* offering formula in which Osiris is named as donor, and its pattern of distribution is complementary to theirs. Other deities provided for the deceased's needs as well. However, there was one important difference between these gods and Osiris. Unlike them, he had triumphed over death, and the ability to do likewise could be conferred upon his followers. The colophon of Pyramid Text Spell 561B states that whoever worships Osiris will live for ever, showing that already at this date those who devoted themselves to the god might expect to share in his resurrection.

8.4. RESULTS OF CHAPTER 4

The first question investigated in Chapter 4 was: why are no spells like those in the Pyramid Texts displayed in non-royal tombs before the First Intermediate Period? The most widely accepted answer to this question is provided by the theory of the democratization of the afterlife, the idea that in the social upheavals that followed the Old Kingdom, privileges formerly reserved for royalty, like identification with Osiris and integration into the hierarchy of the gods in the next world, were usurped by non-royal individuals who had gained access to copies of the spells and rituals that were believed to confer them. We found no evidence to support this theory. Instead, we found that not only did non-royal individuals have the same aspirations for the afterlife as their rulers during the Old Kingdom, they could and did employ the same corpus of spells to ensure their posthumous existence as their rulers, even though they did not display them in their tombs. Furthermore, we saw that the power of kings to influence or control use of burial space was limited, so it is hard to see how any restrictions on the use of such spells could have been enforced. Consequently, the initial appearance of Pyramid Text spells and related texts in private tombs after the end of the Old Kingdom did not mark a change of ritual or belief that widened access to the texts in question, but rather a change in what was selected for display in the burial context. Access and display are two very different things.

The evidence showed that the Egyptian conception of the relationship between Osiris and the deceased remained essentially the same throughout the transition from the Old to the Middle Kingdom, despite the political turmoil that characterized that period. This is significant because it shows that religious change is not necessarily linked to political change; one can happen without the other. There were nevertheless some important developments in terms of how and in what contexts ideas about the relationship of Osiris with the deceased were presented, and new sources inform us about aspects of it which are not mentioned in earlier ones. These new developments and sources were the focus of attention in the second part of Chapter 4.

The first new sources to be considered there were the Coffin Texts, spells for the afterlife which began to be inscribed on coffins and other items of burial equipment belonging to non-royal individuals in the First Intermediate Period. Like the Pyramid Texts, these configure the relationship between Osiris and the dead in more than one way. Some spells assert that the deceased are distinct from Osiris, others identify them with that god. Some spells do both. We found that these apparent contradictions could be explained in the same way as those that we encountered in the Pyramid Texts. The deceased's identification with Osiris was temporary and ritually contingent. It was valid at the moment of a spell's recitation but not beyond that fleeting event. Paratextual evidence in the form of titles and colophons showed that what the composers of the Coffin Text spells really envisaged was a posthumous existence in which the dead would interact with Osiris, performing services for the god and enjoying various benefits arising from association with him in return, not one in which they would become Osiris. This evidence was confirmed by other sources contemporary with the

Coffin Text corpus. As these make clear, the benefits conferred by association with Osiris were not restricted to the tiny minority of individuals who were able to afford an elaborately decorated and inscribed coffin, but could be enjoyed by others as well. Kings of this time did not have coffins inscribed with spells either, but there is sufficient evidence from other sources to show how their relationship with Osiris was envisaged. Like their subjects, rulers of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom looked forward to interaction, not identification, with that god.

An important new development of the period covered in Chapter 4 was the rise to prominence of Abydos as a cult centre of Osiris, and the importance of the annual mysteries celebrated for him there. These offered an occasion when the deceased could participate in the god's worship in this world as well as in the next. Being a follower of Osiris enabled the deceased to span both worlds, and Abydos served as an interface between them. A related development was the increasing importance of the *ba* in the relationship between Osiris and the dead. In this form, the dead could leave the underworld and travel to other spheres of the cosmos like the sky and earth, an activity known as 'going forth by day'.

In this period we found the first unambiguous evidence for the association of Osiris with two other important deities, Sokar and Khentiamentiu. He is syncretized with the former and effectively absorbs the latter, so that Khentiamentiu becomes nothing more than an epithet of Osiris. As far as can be judged, however, these new associations did not have any significant impact on the relationship between that god and the dead. Evidence for a syncretism between Osiris and Re is more equivocal during the period covered in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, the sun god played an important role in Egyptian hopes and aspirations for the afterlife at this time, as did the goddess Hathor. The origins of the later practice whereby deceased women could be affiliated with her rather than Osiris can be traced back as far as the late Old Kingdom.

One final new development of the period treated in this chapter was the increasing importance of justification as a prerequisite for enjoying the benefits of membership in the following of Osiris. Whereas before this goal could be attained either with the help of ritual utterances or through divine intervention, sometimes in response to the prayers of the living, now justification began to assume greater significance. This meant not simply vindication in a dispute involving a specific enemy or opponent, but the positive assessment of one's character and conduct as a whole. In some sources of this period, Osiris himself is said to be in charge of the tribunal where the deceased are judged, but just as often the sun god assumes this function, as he does in later periods as well.

The practice of mummification was by no means universal during the period covered in Chapter 4, so this was not a prerequisite for becoming a follower of Osiris. The rituals performed and the spells recited in conjunction with whatever treatment the body received were more important for this purpose than the nature of the treatment itself. These actually incorporated an assessment of the deceased's character, which paralleled or prefigured the one conducted in the next world. By confirming that the dead were free from sin, they helped to secure their acceptance among the followers

of Osiris. A further measure of the importance that posthumous justification had come to assume by this time is the fact that the living were sometimes called 'justified' proleptically in tomb inscriptions and other texts that were meant to function as permanent records. Even though they had yet to emerge successfully from the divine tribunal, the aspiration was that they would do so, and this needed to be recorded for the sake of posterity.

8.5. RESULTS OF CHAPTER 5

In Chapter 5 we examined whether the relationship between Osiris and the deceased was influenced by developments in solar religion during the New Kingdom and, if so, how. The chapter was divided into two parts. In the first part we looked at the status of Osiris as god of the dead during the Amarna Period. Little evidence was found for the persecution of Osiris in the reign of Akhenaten, unlike some other deities like Amun whose names and images were deliberately effaced on his orders. A number of sources that mention Osiris or other Egyptian gods associated with the Osirian afterlife like Anubis have been dated to Akhenaten's reign by Egyptologists. Closer investigation revealed that many of these were actually earlier or later. Even when such items were removed from consideration, however, the evidence for continued belief in the Osirian afterlife during the Amarna Period proved to be more abundant than one might have expected. Nor was it confined to minor objects, a few specific geographical areas, or particular years within Akhenaten's reign. Was he aware of this survival and, if so, was it a matter of concern to him? We cannot say for certain, but if it was, then the king's ability to influence developments in the religious sphere and, in particular, the beliefs of his subjects concerning the afterlife, may have been more circumscribed than is generally supposed.

One particular theory was investigated, according to which Akhenaten neither proscribed nor ignored Osiris, but deliberately took over his functions and attributes, even retaining the god's traditional iconography, identifying himself with Osiris as the son of the Aten. The evidence cited in support of this view was chiefly iconographic, consisting of two- and three-dimensional representations allegedly depicting the king in the form of that god. But we found that there was no reason to think that any of these actually did so. Moreover, the dating of many of the representations in question to the reign of Akhenaten was questionable, if not impossible. Thus there was no real basis for thinking that he ever identified himself with Osiris.

The nature of the evidence surveyed in the first part of Chapter 5 invited us to rethink some of the commonly held assumptions about the conception of the afterlife in Amarna religion. One of these is the idea that Akhenaten thought only in terms of a single world, this one, inhabited by both the living and the dead. References to the west and to the underworld in texts of this time, some of which are found in tombs of high-ranking officials at Amarna itself, show that this was not the case. The latter was not

just a euphemism for 'tomb' or 'burial place' as some have interpreted it, but a real venue where the deceased could enjoy social interaction with others, just as it was in earlier and later periods of Egyptian history. Another idea that did not withstand close scrutiny is that Akhenaten was regarded as the sole guarantor of posthumous existence during the Amarna Period. There is abundant evidence that the Egyptians of this time looked not only to the king for fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations for the afterlife, but to the Aten as well. In fact, there is still considerable scope for further elucidation of the latter's role as a god of the hereafter.

In the second part of Chapter 5, we investigated the phenomenon known as the 'solar-Osirian unity', which some have claimed characterizes the post-Amarna New Kingdom, and how this affected Egyptian ideas concerning the relationship between Osiris and the deceased. We looked first at the earlier conception of the nocturnal union of Re and Osiris in the underworld, according to which the sun god travelled through that region each night, where he encountered and temporarily united with Osiris, to the mutual benefit of both. In Egyptian sources, this was sometimes characterized as a union of *ba* and corpse, with Re in the role of the former and Osiris in that of the latter. It could also be described as 'Re resting in Osiris and Osiris resting in Re'. The most detailed evidence for this conception is preserved in the guides to the underworld and related sources of the New Kingdom. We were unable to document its existence in a fully developed form prior to that time, although the idea that the sun god entered the underworld at night already features in some Coffin Text spells.

Some have maintained that a change in the conception of the nocturnal union between Re and Osiris occurred in the later New Kingdom. No longer was it regarded as a cyclically recurring event of limited duration which took place at a certain point each night. Instead it was seen as a permanent union, effectively creating a new super-deity, a single entity conjoining both Re and Osiris in a way that was totally unprecedented, the 'great god' Re-Osiris. This new conception is called the solar-Osirian unity in Egyptological literature. But we found that the texts and representations cited in support of this view by its proponents clearly distinguished Re and Osiris as separate deities. Therefore they could not be used as evidence for a conception involving a permanent union between them. Thus there was no reason to think that the original conception of a temporary nightly union of Re and Osiris was ever modified or abandoned.

One point that emerged from our scrutiny of the evidence for the solar-Osirian unity is the disparity in the relationship between Re and Osiris in the underworld guides and related sources. Re is pre-eminent and Osiris subordinate to him. Osiris rules the underworld, but he exercises his power alongside and under the supervision of Re. What has sometimes been interpreted as evidence for a permanent union between the two gods is actually a reflection of this unequal relationship. Moreover, Osiris is also linked with Re in other ways in sources of this period: as the moon who replaces him in the sky at night, or as the nocturnal sun who illumines the underworld during the hours of darkness, just as Re shines over the land of the living during the day. Osiris can even replace Re altogether, being visible in the sky at all times, as the sun during the day and as the moon at night. But we found that statements identifying him in this way

only occur in hymns and other texts recited during the performance of Osiris's cult. What is said to or about the god in such texts is ritually contingent, and does not describe an objective or wider reality.

The various ways in which Osiris is associated with the sun god all have one important feature in common. They link him with Re as part of an eternally recurring cycle. For this reason, 'solar-Osirian cycle' is preferable to 'solar-Osirian unity' as a term to characterize the relationship between the two gods in all its diverse aspects. In our investigation we found that the deceased were thought to benefit from this cycle in four different ways. First, the cycle ensures that the cosmos continues to function, which is in turn a precondition for the continuity of the afterlife. Second, the *ba*/body relationship of Re and Osiris provides a model for that between the *ba* and body of every deceased person. Third, the deceased can participate in the cycle that links Re and Osiris, e.g. by travelling in the day and night barks of the sun god. Thus they are fully integrated within that cycle. Fourth and finally, knowledge of what happens in the underworld is valuable in its own right. The deceased benefit not only from the fact that Re rests in Osiris and Osiris in Re, but from knowing about it as well.

The benefits that the dead were supposed to derive from the union of these two gods did not include identification with them. We found no evidence that the Egyptians believed the deceased would be identified with either of these deities. Nor were the benefits restricted to members of a particular social group. Our investigation showed that the ideas and concepts underlying the guides to the underworld were equally relevant to both royalty and non-royalty. During the New Kingdom only a small number of non-royal individuals included these guides in the decoration of their tombs. A much larger number, however, incorporated their most salient themes and motifs in texts written on papyrus and other media so that they too could benefit from them. The evidence indicates that the Egyptians of the New Kingdom did not envisage a royal afterlife that differed radically from the non-royal one. Both kings and their subjects were admitted to the underworld on equal terms. Once there, they benefited equally from participation in the solar-Osirian cycle.

8.6. RESULTS OF CHAPTER 6

The first question investigated in Chapter 6 was: did the change to Greek rule in the fourth century BC, in particular, the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty, have an impact on Egyptian ideas about the afterlife? To answer this question, three categories of evidence were considered: conceptions of the hereafter in general, the actual texts that were used to benefit the deceased in the afterlife, and funerary art. In all three categories we found that there was significant continuity between the Late Period and the ensuing Ptolemaic Period. As far as we could judge from the textual, representational, and archaeological evidence, the change to Greek rule near the end of the fourth century did not have a significant impact on Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife. Some

intermingling of Greek and Egyptian ideas about the hereafter did take place in the Roman Period, with Greeks borrowing ideas from Egyptians and vice versa. But in view of the late date of the evidence for this type of borrowing, it cannot be connected with the rise of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

The second question investigated was: did the change to Greek rule have an impact on the way in which Egyptians conceptualized the relationship between Osiris and the deceased? Our investigation showed that it did not. Some have argued that the Egyptian conception of the deceased individual and that person's relation to Osiris did undergo a substantial alteration in the Ptolemaic Period. The chief piece of evidence cited by proponents of such a view is the locution *Wsi̯r n* NN, 'Osiris of NN', a variant form of the more common locution *Wsi̯r* NN, conventionally translated 'Osiris NN', which was used to designate the deceased. Since the first instances of this variant form to come to scholarly attention were found in texts dating to the Graeco-Roman Period, it was assumed that it must be a development specific to that time, which reflected Greek influence on Egyptian religion. But our investigation showed that the locution *Wsi̯r n* NN was in use long before the Greeks began arriving in Egypt. It is already attested in the Coffin Texts. Thus it was not an innovation of the Ptolemaic Period, and was not influenced in any way by Greek thought.

In fact, both *Wsi̯r n* NN and *Wsi̯r* NN have to be translated 'Osiris of NN'. One employs the indirect genitive, a possessive construction in which the Egyptian word corresponding to 'of' is actually written out. The other uses the direct genitive, in which it is omitted and the terms denoting the thing possessed and its possessor are simply juxtaposed. At all times, therefore, the Egyptians referred to the deceased as 'Osiris of NN' when they wished to foreground their relationship to the god of the dead. The variant of this locution with the genitival 'of' actually written out becomes more common from the twenty-first dynasty onward, reflecting a development in the Egyptian language well-attested at that time: the progressive obsolescence of the direct genitive and its replacement in various compound constructions by the indirect genitive.

Another locution which has been cited as evidence for a change in the way that the Egyptians conceptualized the relationship between Osiris and the deceased is 'Hathor of NN', which was sometimes used to denote dead women instead of 'Osiris of NN'. Since the first examples of that locution to come to scholarly attention were found in texts dating to the Graeco-Roman Period, it was assumed to have been an innovation of that time, with some claiming that its introduction was the result of Greek influence. However, our investigation revealed an example where a woman was designated as 'Hathor of NN' in a text dating to the twenty-third dynasty. Thus the locution was in use long before the first Greeks arrived in Egypt. It reflects a propensity for employing gender as a basis for classification and association: males are identified as followers of a male deity and females as followers of a female deity. As we saw in Chapter 4, this practice had a long history in Egypt, and can be paralleled in numerous Egyptian sources of earlier date.

The third question investigated in Chapter 6 was: did the rise to prominence of the god Sarapis under Ptolemaic sponsorship influence Egyptian perceptions of the

relationship between Osiris and the deceased? The evidence examined showed that it did not. Osiris was sometimes identified with Sarapis. In a few texts relating to the afterlife, Sarapis is used as an alternative name for Osiris. These texts portray the god as a powerful ruler, a saviour who protects his subjects and punishes their enemies. Since Sarapis was himself a royal god, sometimes explicitly designated as a saviour, we considered the possibility that this image of Osiris and what he is expected to do for the deceased might have been influenced in some way by his association with that deity. But it emerged that there were good Egyptian antecedents for this image which could be traced back well before the arrival of the first Greeks in Egypt. Thus it could not be ascribed to foreign influence or explained as a development of the Ptolemaic Period.

We used the case of Sarapis and Osiris as a further opportunity to assess the power of kings to affect developments in the sphere of religious belief, but found that the ability of the Ptolemies to influence what people actually thought about Osiris was limited. Those rulers fostered a relationship between Sarapis and Osiris as symbols of kingship. In doing so, they exploited this for political purposes, using it to enhance the prestige of their family line by association with those two royal deities. But this did not constitute a religious change. Osiris was a royal god, and Egyptian rulers had already sought to legitimize themselves by association with their divine counterparts for centuries previously. Thus the Ptolemies were simply continuing an indigenous tradition of long standing.

Our investigations in Chapter 6 highlighted three key points. The first was that when seeking to trace changes in Egyptian conceptions of the afterlife in the Graeco-Roman Period we cannot study the evidence of that period in isolation. It has to be viewed in conjunction with that of earlier periods as well. Otherwise, we might overlook important connections between the two bodies of evidence, or precedents for what appear to be new ideas in sources of much greater antiquity. The second point was the arbitrary nature of the distinction often made by Egyptologists between the Graeco-Roman Period and earlier periods of Egyptian history when studying Egyptian religion. The third and final point was that this arbitrary distinction creates the spurious impression that the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods were themselves a unity, when in fact there were some significant differences between them.

8.7. RESULTS OF CHAPTER 7

In Chapter 7, we traced the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife in Egypt using four different places as case studies: the Akhmim region, Philae, Abydos, and Thebes. We found that the evidence for such belief ceased at different times in each place, ranging from the middle of the second century AD, if not earlier, to the third quarter of the fourth century. In some of the places studied, the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife was coterminous with the end of belief in Osiris himself; in others

it was not. At Philae, for instance, the evidence for a cult of Osiris continues until the middle of the fifth century AD, about 75 years after that for belief in the Osirian afterlife ceases. Furthermore, the end of belief in Osiris in a given locality did not necessarily entail the end of traditional Egyptian religion as a whole there. In some places, to judge from the evidence that we considered, other manifestations of traditional religion persisted well after belief in Osiris had stopped. Thus each of the four places that we investigated revealed its own distinct local patterns of religious change.

We found evidence for Osirian belief in both official and private religious spheres. In most instances, it appears to have persisted in the latter longer than it did in the former. Thus belief in the Osirian afterlife was not dependent on the continuation of that god's cult in temples. The gradual withdrawal of state support for Egyptian temples and other religious institutions during the second and third centuries was a serious blow to their chances of long-term survival. Temples that hosted cults of Osiris would have been no less affected by this development than any others. But we found no evidence for suppression of belief in Osiris or the Osirian afterlife by the state. Nor, in view of all that we have learned in earlier chapters about the limited power of rulers and governments to influence what ordinary people actually believed, is it easy to imagine how such a policy could have been implemented, even if a conscious decision to do so had been taken.

We went on to survey evidence for the persistence of belief in Osiris and the Osirian afterlife in cities and regions of Egypt that were not covered in our four case studies. In these other places, as in most of those treated in the case studies, belief in the Osirian afterlife gradually disappeared during the course of the second and third centuries AD. Magical texts apart, which may need to be treated as a special case, we found no direct evidence for persistence of belief in Osiris himself as late as the fourth century anywhere in Egypt other than Philae. The graffiti from that island are by far the latest witnesses that we have for the survival of such belief in an Egyptian context. The cult of Osiris may have survived longer in countries to the north and south of Egypt than it did in Egypt itself.

At the beginning of Chapter 7, the existence of two different models for the end of traditional Egyptian religion was noted: the conflict and triumph model and the gradual disappearance model. Our investigation revealed no trustworthy evidence for direct conflict between Christians and adherents of traditional Egyptian religion in the places that we studied. Rather, it would appear that the former did not impinge upon the latter in any meaningful way. At the sites investigated in this chapter, moreover, the evidence for belief in the Osirian afterlife, and for the practice of traditional Egyptian religion more generally, did not cease suddenly or all at once. Instead, a gradual process of decline and contraction was observed, proceeding at different rates in each locality. In some places, this process extended over centuries. Thus the evidence of our four case studies speaks unambiguously in favour of the gradual disappearance model, not just for belief in the Osirian afterlife, but for other manifestations of traditional Egyptian religion as well.

8.8. RECURRENT THEMES

It will be evident from this summary that several themes recur again and again in the book. Some of these were already signalled in the introduction. One is the relationship between religion and politics. The book emphasizes the disjunction between religious change and political change. The former cannot always be explained as a consequence of the latter. Moreover, it highlights the limitations on the power of a king or government to influence religious ideas, in particular, ideas relating to the sphere of the afterlife. Most rulers probably had no interest in trying to do so. Those that did, whether Akhenaten or the Emperor Constantius II, seem to have had little success in imposing their views on their subjects. Some anthropologists distinguish 'cold' prescriptive societies from 'hot' performative ones. In the former, the existing social order is reproduced without contradiction. In the latter, social action and discourse are not so constrained by rules and norms.[1] From our investigation it would appear that, in terms of religion at least, ancient Egypt was not such a prescriptive society as many have thought.

A second recurrent theme is the importance of looking at the widest possible range of evidence when investigating ideas and practices relating to the afterlife. This has various ramifications. One is that we must try to contextualize evidence both diachronically and synchronically. Another is that we should refrain from dividing the evidence into arbitrary categories like 'royal' and 'non-royal' or 'elite' and 'non-elite', and then looking at each in isolation. If we do so, we are liable to miss significant connections and parallels between evidence in one category and that in another.

The Pyramid Texts, for instance, are part of a continuum of Egyptian ritual texts extending over many centuries, and need to be viewed as such if we are to interpret them correctly. But we also need to look at them as part of a range of texts dealing with the afterlife that were in use concurrently during the Old Kingdom, some royal and others not, each of which can contribute to a better understanding of the others (section 3.9.3). Likewise, we gain a better idea of how widely the benefits of spells like the ones in the Coffin Texts of the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom were diffused when we study those utterances in conjunction with texts on contemporary objects like stelae, offering tables, and false doors made for people who did not own coffins inscribed with Coffin Text spells (section 4.11.3). In the New Kingdom, if we focus exclusively upon guides to the underworld in royal tombs, we are apt to miss important parallels to some of their contents in contemporary private tombs or in Book of the Dead manuscripts made for non-royal individuals (section 5.16.1). One serious consequence, if we fail to take all the evidence into account when analysing sources like those just described, is that we may be led to posit the existence of distinct aspirations for the afterlife based on social class or economic status which are entirely artificial. In no period of Egyptian history did we find any evidence for such

[1] H. Vandkilde, *Culture and Change in Central European Prehistory: 6th to 1st Millennium BC* (Aarhus, 2007), p. 15.

distinctions. In particular, we found no evidence that the Egyptians ever envisaged separate afterlives for royalty and non-royalty.

A third theme is the importance of dating the evidence at our disposal accurately. Many of the problems and uncertainties that we encountered in the course of this book arose because we were unable to date particular types of evidence with any degree of precision. We were faced with this challenge at the very outset of our investigations. What is the date of the earliest reference to Osiris in our sources? The earliest securely datable reference is from the reign of the fifth dynasty king Reneferef. There may be earlier ones, but because of uncertainty over the exact age of the monuments in which these occur, we cannot be sure (section 3.3). At the other end of our time frame, in considering the latest evidence for belief in Osiris at Abydos, our investigation was hampered by the fact that, with rare exceptions, the Greek graffiti in the temple of Seti I that attest to the final stages of this belief do not inform us when they were written, and our knowledge of the palaeography of these is insufficient to date them precisely by that means (section 7.3.8). If dating methods are ever improved, we can expect a corresponding increase in our understanding of when key developments in the history of belief in the Osirian afterlife actually took place.

A fourth theme is the desirability of scrutinizing local and regional manifestations of religious belief carefully before one tries to combine the evidence pertaining to these into a bigger picture. This theme was especially prominent in Chapter 7 with its four case studies, each devoted to a specific locality. But it is a feature of earlier chapters as well. We should be sensitive to the possibility that a given phenomenon may be purely local or regional. Did ideas about the afterlife vary from one locality to another in predynastic and early dynastic Egypt or were they more or less the same throughout the land? Was Osiris originally a local god? To what extent should we regard the Pyramid Texts, at least in their initial phase of use, as a local, distinctively Memphite corpus of spells? How localized was Amarna religion? What happens when we study the guides to the underworld of the New Kingdom and later as manifestations of a specifically Theban conception of the relationship between Re and Osiris? Even if we cannot provide definitive answers to questions like these, it is still of benefit to pose them.

A fifth and final recurrent theme is the limitations of the different kinds of evidence at our disposal. Here too, there are various aspects to consider. Can ritual texts actually inform us about Egyptian aspirations for the afterlife? As we discovered, the answer is yes, but only if we can distinguish between those statements in them that are ritually contingent and those that are not. We cannot simply read ritual texts as menus or blueprints detailing what the deceased hoped or expected to do in the hereafter. This applies not only to the spells in the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom, but to those in the Coffin Texts and Book of the Dead of later periods as well.

Archaeological evidence, when unaccompanied by texts, also has its limitations. We saw repeatedly that one cannot infer religious belief, in particular, beliefs about the afterlife, from material remains or artefacts alone. For this purpose, written evidence is essential (section 1.11). We reached this conclusion as a result of our investigation of the predynastic period, a time before writing had actually been invented in Egypt. But it

was reinforced by our study of evidence from later periods when writing was in regular use. For example, various theories have been advanced which explain the pyramid as a stairway to the stars, a stylized representation of the sun's rays, or a symbol of the primeval mound (sections 2.3.3 and 2.6.4). However, these lack credibility because there is no written evidence to support them. In point of fact, written evidence refutes them, showing that for the ancient Egyptians the pyramid had a totally different meaning (section 2.6.4.1). Likewise, we found no justification for the view that some coffins, shrouds, and mummy portraits of the Graeco-Roman Period portray the deceased in the form of the goddess Hathor. In some instances, their iconography does not resemble that of Hathor. In others, it is more characteristic of the goddess Isis. Examples like this illustrate how unreliable identifications made solely on the basis of iconography can be, irrespective of the date of the material involved (section 6.6.8.3).

8.9. BENEFITS OF THE INVESTIGATIVE APPROACH ADOPTED IN THIS BOOK

What are the benefits of investigating a topic like belief in the Osirian afterlife using the approach adopted in this book? In my view, there are several. First, looking at and comparing evidence for a phenomenon from several different periods rather than only one affords us a wider perspective on the problems that it raises and gives us a better chance of solving them. A good example of this is the practice of using masculine personal pronouns in conjunction with feminine ones to refer to deceased women in texts for the afterlife, discussed in section 4.10.2. According to one theory, based on the evidence from only a single period, women acquired both male and female aspects in the hereafter, and where masculine pronouns were used in such texts it was specifically their male aspects that were invoked. Masculine or feminine pronouns were chosen for particular sections of a text, depending on the magical agenda of the sections in question. But when we assemble and compare the evidence for this phenomenon from all periods of Egyptian history, it becomes clear that this theory is untenable. Masculine and feminine pronouns alternate with each other in passages where there can be no question of a change in magical agenda. We even find shifts from one type of pronoun to the other within the same sentence.

The real explanation for such variation is that the vast majority of extant Egyptian texts for the afterlife are based on models originally drafted for men. When these were adapted for women, some of the masculine personal pronouns were altered to feminine ones, but this was not always carried through consistently. Thus we find both masculine and feminine personal pronouns used side by side in the same text. Precisely the same is true where texts originally drafted for a woman were adapted for a man, so it is clear that a new gender is not being attributed to the deceased for magical reasons. But in neither case can the fact that some pronouns were left unchanged be explained as a

result of carelessness or scribal errors. This is shown by the fact that several texts which display variation of pronoun gender were inscribed on expensive objects of careful workmanship made for high-ranking individuals. It emerges that, for the Egyptians, what was of paramount importance was to have one's name mentioned in or otherwise associated with a text for the afterlife. If the gender of the personal pronouns used in that text was the same as that of the beneficiary, so much the better, but this was not absolutely essential. However, this fact only becomes apparent when one looks at the full range of available evidence.

Another advantage of comparing evidence from many periods is that a text from one period can often illuminate one from another period in a way that other texts from that period cannot. As noted in section 5.7.2, the statement in the Abydos Stela of Ramesses IV that Re and Osiris speak 'as one mouth' has been interpreted by some to mean that they are regarded as a single entity, but this ignores the idiomatic nature of the expression in question, which actually means 'of one accord, in agreement'. The correct meaning of the statement can be elucidated with the help of demotic legal texts of the Ptolemaic Period, where a cognate expression occurs and the sense is unambiguous.

Likewise, comparison of a development that took place in one period with a similar development that took place in a different period can help to elucidate both. In looking at the identification of Osiris with Sokar, attested from the First Intermediate Period onward, for example, we observed that this did not seem to have had any significant impact on the relationship between Osiris and the deceased (4.14.1). This view was corroborated by our study of the identification of Osiris with Sarapis, attested in the Ptolemaic Period and later. There too, the equation of the two deities did not really seem to affect how the relationship between Osiris and the dead was conceptualized (6.12.3). Thus the idea that this relationship was not necessarily altered when Osiris was identified with another deity is supported by evidence from two periods and not just one. In effect, the earlier identification of Osiris with Sokar provides a precedent that helps us better to understand the later one of Osiris with Sarapis. The same is true of the relationship between Osiris and Re attested in the New Kingdom underworld guides (sections 5.7.2 and 5.9) and that between Osiris and Amun as presented in Theban sources of the first millennium BC (section 7.4.6.2).

Furthermore, if we look at evidence from only a single period, we may be tempted to regard an idea or practice that we encounter there as an innovation of the period in question, ignoring or overlooking antecedents in earlier ones. Thus, we may be led to posit change where in fact there is continuity. Good examples of this that have emerged during the course of our investigations include the locution *Wsi̯r n* NN, once thought to be a development specific to the Graeco-Roman Period, but actually attested as early as the Coffin Texts (sections 4.10.4.3 and 6.6.1–2); the locution 'Hathor of NN', once explained as an innovation resulting from Greek influence, but already attested in the twenty-third dynasty, centuries before the first Greek settlers arrived in Egypt (section 6.6.8.1); and the conception of Osiris as a strong active ruler who protects his subjects rather than a passive deity who requires protection himself. As shown in section 6.12.1,

this owes nothing to his identification with Sarapis in the Ptolemaic Period, since it is already well attested centuries prior to the rise of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

More generally, an approach that utilizes the entire span of Egyptian history as a field for investigation provides scope for applying the standards of rigour normally employed in the evaluation of evidence characteristic of one period of that history to the analysis of evidence from other periods. This not only provides a fresh way of looking at the evidence in question, it can also have the beneficial effect of exposing limitations in the approaches traditionally used to interpret it. A predynastic burial and a demotic papyrus of the Roman Period, for example, present two very different types of evidence, but there is no reason why these should not be evaluated with the same degree of rigour. In the final analysis, a fact-based argument is a fact-based argument and speculation is speculation, no matter what the date or nature of the material under scrutiny.

Finally, tracing a phenomenon like belief in the Osirian afterlife over a period of many centuries gives us a more coherent sense of it as something organic and continually developing rather than static. It allows us to distinguish between change and continuity more easily. Over time, Osiris acquired new characteristics and attributes, and the dead were thought to interact with him in new ways and in new venues. Likewise, the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife was not a sudden event, but a process of gradual contraction, with some features of that belief surviving longer than others. Which qualities or attributes of Osiris are found in all periods of Egyptian history and which are not? Which are found only rarely in some periods and more frequently in others? The broader perspective conferred by utilizing a period of millennia as our framework also gives us a better idea of the phenomenon of religious change itself, its manifold nature, and how it unfolds at different speeds and times in different places. Not least, it gives us a sense of the historic dimension, the overall span of time during which belief in Osiris as the god of the dead persisted as a powerful influence on the thoughts and actions of his devotees.

8.10. WHY OSIRIS?

Much of our attention in this book has been devoted to questions of when and where: when belief in the Osirian afterlife first arose, where it is attested, when it came to an end, and so on. Despite some uncertainties regarding the date and provenience of certain categories of evidence, these can generally be answered in an objective way. If we cannot be absolutely certain when belief in Osiris as god of the dead first arose, we can at least identify the earliest securely datable evidence for that belief. By contrast, we have paid relatively little attention to questions of why and how. In the course of the book we have considered various theories that have been proposed to explain the rise of belief in Osiris and the Osirian afterlife. Typically, these ascribe it to political factors, a decision made by the king or the state. But as we have seen, the evidence to support

such theories is lacking. Even those who have proposed them cannot say which king made the choice to initiate the cult of Osiris or when this happened. The same is true of the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife. Again, there is a tendency to attribute its demise to factors like anti-pagan legislation or competition and conflict with an increasingly militant rival in the form of state-sponsored Christianity. But we found no evidence to support this picture either.

In comparing Osiris with other Egyptian gods who were already associated with the afterlife at the time when he made his first appearance, it is not difficult to see why he rose to prominence and eclipsed them to become the primary Egyptian god of the dead. He offered something that they did not. Anubis, for example, was relied upon to provide burial and sustenance for the deceased, but Osiris could provide eternal life. This was already the case in the Old Kingdom. As we have seen, the colophon of Pyramid Text Spell 561B states that whoever worships Osiris will live for ever (section 3.9.1). Moreover, since the worshippers of Osiris were, in the first instance, divine beings themselves, the deceased, by participating in his worship, acquired the same status as them.[2] So it was not just eternal life, but eternal life in divine form that Osiris bestowed upon his followers.

This link between worshipping Osiris and attaining the status of a god is made explicit in Coffin Text Spell 789, where the guardians of the gates of the underworld are enjoined to make a way for the deceased so that he might 'enter, worship Osiris, and be divine for ever'.[3] That these words represent a genuine Egyptian aspiration for the afterlife is confirmed by the paratextual evidence of the title of Coffin Text Spell 1050: 'Spell for being a genuine god of/for Osiris'.[4] The devotees of Osiris were supposed to enjoy proximity to him and see him;[5] and the connection between personal access to the god and immortality is further underlined in the opening words of Spell 1050: 'The one who sees Osiris will not moor in a state of death.'[6]

But this still does not tell us why Osiris was introduced at the point in time when he was, or what motivated the desire for an upgrade from deities like Anubis who simply looked after the material needs of the deceased to one who did far more than that. We could, of course, speculate, but since so much of this book has been devoted to sweeping away the layers of speculation that have accumulated around Osiris and his cult, this is hardly the place to start adding new ones. We are equally unable to say why certain key developments and changes in the Egyptian conception of the relationship between Osiris and the dead occurred when they did, for example, the increased emphasis on good conduct during one's lifetime as a prerequisite for admittance to the following of Osiris that characterizes the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom (section 4.15.3). In some cases, due to uncertainty about the date when a

[2] M. Smith, 'Osiris NN or Osiris of NN?', in B. Backes, I. Munro, and S. Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen: Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuch-Symposiums 2005* (Wiesbaden, 2006), p. 334.

[3] A. de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7 (Chicago, 1961), p. 2l–m.

[4] Ibid., p. 302d.

[5] Smith in Backes, Munro, and Stöhr (eds), *Totenbuch-Forschungen*, p. 335.

[6] De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* 7, p. 302e.

particular development actually occurred, it is especially difficult to identify the causes that gave rise to it. One thinks, for example, of the conception of the nocturnal encounter of Re and Osiris in the underworld, which is not explicitly attested until the New Kingdom, although some think it originated in the Middle Kingdom or even the Old Kingdom. We can hardly speculate about what contemporary events may have influenced or given rise to this if we do not know which events were actually contemporary with it.

The same applies to the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife. Why did Egyptians cease to look forward to a posthumous existence spent in the following of Osiris? No one who abandoned such expectations has left a record of what motivated him or her to do so. Therefore, we have no first-hand, emic account to inform us about the reasons. But there has been a considerable amount of research devoted to the question of why people turn away from or reject the religious traditions in which they have been raised. Much of this focuses on modern cases of such disengagement,[7] but some attention has been given to instances of the phenomenon in the ancient world as well.[8]

The research on this subject has revealed a number of reasons why people abandoned their religion in antiquity. Some did so to avoid persecution, faced with threats of death, imprisonment, confiscation of property, or exile.[9] Others did it to escape paying taxes that were only levied on a particular religious group.[10] Yet others renounced their religion to further social or political ambitions, or increase their chances of attaining wealth and success in business.[11] Education and participation in public life might expose people to a culture and religion different to their own, sometimes with the result of weakening their loyalty to their original faith.[12] Pressures resulting from ties to family, friends, or other social networks also contributed to religious defection, particularly in cases where an adherent of one faith was married to that of another.[13]

For some, concern over matters of doctrine or practice was the motivation for abandoning their religion. We know of cases where people took this step because they had doubts about theodicy or the efficacy of divine providence.[14] But there were also cases where they felt that their religion was too oppressive or restrictive in comparison with others.[15] People might be swayed to leave one religion and join another by a charismatic leader or even a dream or vision of a god.[16] In some instances, their decision was motivated by genuine emotional or intellectual conviction that one belief was superior to another.[17] Porphyry (*c.* AD 232–305), for example, records the case of a man called Ammonius who abandoned Christianity 'when he began to think philosophically'.[18]

[7] See, for example, the studies published in D. Bromley (ed.), *Falling from the Faith: Causes and Consequences of Religious Apostasy* (Newbury Park, 1988).
[8] e.g. S. Wilson, *Leaving the Fold: Apostates and Defectors in Antiquity* (Minneapolis, 2004).
[9] Ibid., pp. 4, 23–4, 71–2, and 85–6.
[10] Ibid., pp. 43–4.
[11] Ibid., pp. 28–30, 38, 42, and 76–7.
[12] Ibid, pp. 38–9 and 61.
[13] Ibid., pp. 34, 38, 41–2, and 85–6.
[14] Ibid., pp. 30 and 47–8.
[15] Ibid., pp. 33–4 and 39.
[16] Ibid., pp. 41–2 and 56.
[17] Ibid., pp. 25 and 42.
[18] Ibid., p. 95.

Conflict with the leadership or other members of a religious group could also be a reason for leaving it. According to one account, Porphyry, who became one of the most strident anti-Christian polemicists, was originally a member of that faith himself, but renounced it after being beaten up by a group of his co-religionists.[19] Others are reported to have abandoned their ancestral religion for more unusual reasons. Rabbinic tradition records that Elisha ben Abuyah (born sometime before AD 70) was predestined to renounce Judaism because his mother walked past some heathen temples when carrying him in her womb and inhaled the incense that they were burning there. Apparently, one whiff was sufficient to sow the seeds of apostasy in her as yet unborn child.[20]

How many of the motives enumerated in the preceding paragraphs are likely to have induced people living in Egypt to abandon belief in Osiris and the Osirian afterlife? Some we can probably discount with a fair degree of confidence. We have found no evidence that anyone was ever persecuted for professing allegiance to the god, so it is unlikely that people abandoned Osiris as a result of coercion. Belief in the Osirian afterlife had already begun contracting significantly well before Christians as a group were sufficiently powerful or influential in Egypt to make it worthwhile adopting their faith to advance one's social or economic position. Traditional Egyptian religion in general had few strict doctrines, so it is unlikely that anyone ever abandoned it on account of doctrinal disputes or disagreements. Nor was it particularly oppressive or restrictive. Leaving these motives aside, however, most of the others cited above could well have been among those that led followers of Osiris to give up their allegiance to the god. Nor is it difficult to envisage situations in which a combination of two or more of these motives played a part.

Research has shown that the motives which lead people to leave a religion today are substantially the same as those that led them to do so in antiquity, although the range of these is perhaps slightly wider now than it was then.[21] One important difference is that whereas in ancient times, those who abandoned one religious faith normally did so in order to convert to another, in modern times it is not uncommon for people to cease practising one religion without adopting a new one, becoming agnostics or even atheists. Some have questioned whether such an option existed in antiquity. Perhaps there was no such thing as total disbelief in the divine world among Egyptians during the period we are considering now, but as we saw in section 7.4.9, acceptance of the existence of a deity or deities did not invariably entail worship or veneration of them. One could acknowledge their existence but remain indifferent to it. Even if there is no evidence for atheism as such in late antique Egypt, we can still identify instances of what might be termed disaffection with or disengagement from a particular religious tradition.

One striking case is that of the monk Pachomius (*c.* AD 290–346). His biography records that he was born to pagan parents in the town of Esna in Upper Egypt. Even as

[19] Ibid., pp. 94–5. [20] Ibid., pp. 44–5.
[21] See ibid., pp. 118–31; Bromley (ed.), *Falling from the Faith*.

a child, he experienced difficulties in following their faith, however. When his parents took him to the river to sacrifice to the creatures in the water, the creatures became disturbed and fled, angering the one in charge of the sacrifice who then drove him away. When his parents brought him to the temple and gave him some of the sacrificial wine to drink, he could not swallow it but vomited it out instead.[22] Were the parents of Pachomius devotees of Osiris? Unfortunately, our sources do not identify the deities that they worshipped. In any event, when Pachomius was conscripted into the army, Christians came to the prison where he and his fellow soldiers were confined and looked after them, providing them with food, drink, and other necessities. Pachomius was so impressed by their charity that he resolved to become a Christian if he survived his time in the military.[23] Thus it was not a specific doctrine that swayed him, but rather the behaviour of those who professed that doctrine.

For reasons explained in Chapter 7, we should be cautious about accepting the veracity of a literary narrative like this without confirmation from other sources. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that in this account Pachomius' disillusionment with the pagan rites and practices of his parents is said to have occurred well before his decision to convert to Christianity. In fact, his antipathy to these was already in evidence long before he was even aware of the existence of Christianity as a possible alternative to his ancestral faith. Vomiting out sacrificial wine is hardly an auspicious portent of long-term commitment to paganism. For a considerable period of time, therefore, he was effectively disengaged from religion altogether. What this shows is that, for the writer of the biography, it was not unthinkable that someone of his time might abandon a set of inherited religious beliefs and practices without feeling compelled to adopt a new set in place of them.

We should remember this when thinking about the end of belief in the Osirian afterlife. As noted in Chapter 7, there is no real basis for the assumption that the demise of Osiris was linked to the rise of Christianity. Some may have transferred their hopes for the next world directly from him to Jesus, but for others there may have been an interval characterized by doubt, apathy, or indifference between their decision to abandon one set of beliefs about the hereafter and their adoption of another. This applies to groups or communities as much as to individuals. Disillusionment with the idea of the Osirian afterlife may not have meant total suspension of belief in it, but it might well have resulted in an end to active interest or participation in the rites and practices associated with that idea on the part of those thus affected.

So in the final analysis we are unable to say precisely why people stopped believing in the Osirian afterlife, other than that at some point it ceased to have meaning for them. Before this happened, however, that belief had not only survived but flourished for centuries. It endured for such a long time that in this book we have been able to follow

[22] See L.-Th. Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta* (Louvain, 1953), p. 2; F. Halkin, *Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae* (Brussels, 1932), pp. 2–3.

[23] See Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, pp. 4–5; Halkin, *Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae*, pp. 3–4.

its trajectory through parts of no less than four different millennia. But with the death of the last priest at Philae, no longer would worshippers beseech Osiris to come to them, entreating him in the words of the traditional rituals: 'Our faces live at the sight of your face'[24] or 'Men and women are praying for your return.'[25] Had any devotees of the god been left to contemplate the changed scene, they might well have lamented with Isis and Nephthys: 'A shadow has fallen over the land today. Heaven has been cast down to the ground.'[26]

[24] P. Berlin 3008, 3/8–9: R.O. Faulkner, 'The Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys', in *Mélanges Maspero* 1 (Cairo, 1935–8), plate 2.

[25] P. MMA 35.9.21, 46/7: J.-C. Goyon, *Le papyrus d'Imouthès fils de Psintaês au Metropolitan Museum of Art de New-York (Papyrus MMA 35.9.21)* (New York, 1999), plate 37.

[26] P. Bremner-Rhind, 12/11–12: R.O. Faulkner, *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind (British Museum No. 10188)* (Brussels, 1933), p. 22.

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